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THE WORKS OF
TOBIAS SMOLLETT
IN TWELVE VOLUMES

LIMITED EDITION

LIMITED for sale in America and Europe to One Thousand Numbered and Registered Sets, of which this is Number 603

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THE WORKS OF TOBIAS SMOLLETT

VOLUME NINE

THE ADVENTURES

OF

COUNT FATHOM

COMPLETE IN TWO PARTS

PART II.

WITH THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE, AND AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. H. MAYNADIER, PH.D.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

NEW YORK

GEORGE D. SPROUL

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THE ADVENTURES *of* FERDINAND COUNT FATHOM

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

OUR ADVENTURER IS MADE ACQUAINTED WITH A NEW SCENE OF LIFE.

JUST as he entered these mansions of misery, his ears were invaded with a hoarse and dreadful voice, exclaiming, "You, Bess Beetle, score a couple of fresh eggs, a pennyworth of butter, and half a pint of mountain to the king; and stop credit till the bill is paid: — He is now debtor for fifteen shillings and sixpence, and d—n me if I trust him one farthing more, if he was the best king in Christendom. And, d'ye hear, send Ragged-head with five pounds of potatoes for Major Macleaver's supper, and let him have what drink he wants; the fat widow gentlewoman from Pimlico has promised to quit his score. Sir Mungo Barebones may have some hasty pudding and small beer, though I don't expect to see his coin, no more than to receive the eighteen pence I laid out for a pair of breeches to his backside — what then? he 's a quiet sort of a body, and a great scholar, and it was a scandal to the place to see him going about in that naked condition. As

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for the mad Frenchman with the beard, if you give him so much as a cheese-paring, you b—ch, I'll send you back to the hole, among your old companions; an impudent dog! I'll teach him to draw his sword upon the governor of an English county jail. What! I suppose he thought he had to do with a French hang-tang-dang, rabbit him! he shall eat his white feather, before I give him credit for a morsel of bread."

Although our adventurer was very little disposed, at this juncture, to make observations foreign to his own affairs, he could not help taking notice of these extraordinary injunctions; especially those concerning the person who was entitled king, whom, however, he supposed to be some prisoner elected as the magistrate by the joint suffrage of his fellows. Having taken possession of his chamber, which he rented at five shillings a week, and being ill at ease in his own thoughts, he forthwith secured his door, undressed, and went to bed, in which, though it was none of the most elegant or inviting couches, he enjoyed profound repose after the accumulated fatigues and mortifications of the day. Next morning, after breakfast, the keeper entered his apartment, and gave him to understand, that the gentlemen under his care, having heard of the Count's arrival, had deputed one of their number to wait upon him with the compliments of condolence suitable to the occasion, and invite him to become a member of their society. Our hero could not politely dispense with this instance of civility, and their ambassador being instantly introduced by the name of Captain Minikin, saluted him with great solemnity.

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This was a person equally remarkable for his extraordinary figure and address; his age seemed to border upon forty, his stature amounted to five feet, his visage was long, meagre, and weather-beaten, and his aspect, though not quite rueful, exhibited a certain formality, which was the result of care and conscious importance. He was very little encumbered with flesh and blood; yet what body he had was well proportioned, his limbs were elegantly turned, and by his carriage he was well entitled to that compliment which we pay to any person when we say he has very much the air of a gentleman. There was also an evident singularity in his dress, which, though intended as an improvement, appeared to be an extravagant exaggeration of the mode, and at once evinced him an original to the discerning eyes of our adventurer, who received him with his usual complaisance, and made a very eloquent acknowledgment of the honour and satisfaction he received from the visit of the representative, and the hospitality of his constituents. The captain's peculiarities were not confined to his external appearance; for his voice resembled the sound of a bassoon, or the aggregate hum of a whole bee-hive, and his discourse was almost nothing else than a series of quotations from the English poets, interlarded with French phrases, which he retained for their significance, on the recommendation of his friends, being himself unacquainted with that or any other outlandish tongue.

Fathom, finding this gentleman of a very communicative disposition, thought he could not have a fairer opportunity of learning the history of his fel-

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low-prisoners; and, turning the conversation on that subject, was not disappointed in his expectation. "I don't doubt, sir," said he, with the utmost solemnity of declamation, "but you look with horror upon every object that surrounds you in this uncomfortable place; but, nevertheless, here are some, who, as my friend Shakespeare has it, *have seen better days, and have with holy bell been knolled to church; and sat at good men's feasts, and wiped their eyes of drops that sacred pity hath engendered.* You must know, sir, that, exclusive of the *canaille*, or the *profanum vulgus*, as they are styled by Horace, there are several small communities in the jail, consisting of people who are attracted by the manners and dispositions of each other; for this place, sir, is quite a *microcosm*, and as the great world, so is this, *a stage, and all the men and women merely players.* For my own part, sir, I have always made it a maxim to associate with the best of company I can find. Not that I pretend to boast of my family or extraction; because, you know, as the poet says, *Vix ea nostra voco.* My father, 't is true, was a man that piqued himself upon his pedigree, as well as upon his politesse and personal merit; for he had been a very old officer in the army, and I myself may say I was born with a spontoon in my hand. Sir, I have had the honour to serve his Majesty these twenty years, and have been bandied about in the course of duty through all the British plantations, and you see the recompense of all my service. But this is a disagreeable subject, and therefore I shall waive it; however, as Butler observes:

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My only comfort is, that now
My dubbolt fortune is so low,
That either it must quickly end,
Or turn about again and mend.

"And now, to return from this digression, you will perhaps be surprised to hear that the head or chairman of our club is really a sovereign prince; no less, I'll assure you, than the celebrated Theodore king of Corsica, who lies in prison for a debt of a few hundred pounds. *Heu! quantum mutatus ab illo.* It is not my business to censure the conduct of my superiors; but I always speak my mind in a cavalier manner, and as, according to the Spectator, talking to a friend is no more than thinking aloud, *entre nous*, his Corsican majesty has been scurvily treated by a certain administration. Be that as it will, he is a personage of a very portly appearance, and is quite master of the *bienséance*. Besides, they will find it their interest to have recourse again to his alliance; and in that case some of us may expect to profit by his restoration. But few words are best.

"He that maintains the second rank in our assembly is one Major Macleaver, an Irish gentleman, who has served abroad; a soldier of fortune, sir, a man of unquestionable honour and courage, but a little overbearing, in consequence of his knowledge and experience. He is a person of good address, to be sure, and quite free of the *mauvaise honte*, and he may have seen a good deal of service. But what then? other people may be as good as he, though they have not had such opportunities; if he speaks five or six languages, he does not pretend to any taste in the

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liberal arts, which are the criterion of an accomplished gentleman.

"The next is Sir Mungo Barebones, the representative of a very ancient family in the north; his affairs are very much *deranged*, but he is a gentleman of great probity and learning, and at present engaged in a very grand scheme, which, if he can bring it to bear, will render him famous to all posterity; no less than the conversion of the Jews and the Gentiles. The project, I own, looks chimerical to one who has not conversed with the author; but, in my opinion, he has clearly demonstrated, from an anagrammatical analysis of a certain Hebrew word, that his present Majesty, whom God preserve, is the person pointed at in Scripture as the temporal Messiah of the Jews; and, if he could once raise by subscription such a trifling sum as twelve hundred thousand pounds, I make no doubt but he would accomplish his aim, vast and romantic as it seems to be.

"Besides these, we have another messmate, who is a French chevalier, an odd sort of a man, a kind of Lazarillo de Tormes, a caricatura; he wears a long beard, pretends to be a great poet, and makes a d—ed *fracas* with his verses. The king has been obliged to exert his authority over him more than once, by ordering him into close confinement, for which he was so rash as to send his majesty a challenge; but he afterwards made his submission, and was again taken into favour. The truth is, I believe his brain is a little disordered, and, he being a stranger, we overlook his extravagancies.

"Sir, we shall think ourselves happy in your acces-

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sion to our society. You will be under no sort of restraint; for, though we dine at one table, every individual calls and pays for his own mess. Our conversation, such as it is, will not, I hope, be disagreeable; and though we have not opportunities of breathing the pure Arcadian air, and cannot, 'under the shade of melancholy boughs, lose and neglect the creeping hours of time,' we may enjoy ourselves over a glass of punch or a dish of tea. Nor are we destitute of friends, who visit us in these shades of distress. The major has a numerous acquaintance of both sexes; among others, a first cousin of good fortune, who, with her daughters, often cheer our solitude; she is a very sensible ladylike gentlewoman, and the young ladies have a certain *dégagée* air, that plainly shows they have seen the best company. Besides, I will venture to recommend Mrs. Minikin as a woman of tolerable breeding and capacity, who, I hope, will not be found altogether deficient in the accomplishments of the sex. So that we find means to make little parties, in which the time glides away insensibly. Then I have a small collection of books which are at your service. You may amuse yourself with Shakespeare, or Milton, or Don Quixote, or any of our modern authors that are worth reading, such as the Adventures of Loveill, Lady Frail, George Edwards, Joe Thompson, Bampfylde Moore Carew, Young Scarron, and Miss Betsy Thoughtless; and if you have a taste for drawing, I can entertain you with a parcel of prints by the best masters."

A man of our hero's politeness could not help expressing himself in the warmest terms of gratitude

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for this courteous declaration. He thanked the captain in particular for his obliging offers, and begged he would be so good as to present his respects to the society, of which he longed to be a member. It was determined, therefore, that Minikin should return in an hour, when the Count would be dressed, in order to conduct him into the presence of his majesty; and he had already taken his leave for the present, when all of a sudden he came back, and taking hold of a waistcoat that lay upon a chair, "Sir," said he, "give me leave to look at that fringe; I think it is the most elegant knitting I ever saw. But pray, sir, are not these quite out of fashion? I thought plain silk, such as this that I wear, had been the mode, with the pockets very low." Before Fathom had time to make any sort of reply, he took notice of his hat and pumps; the first of which, he said, was too narrow in the brims, and the last an inch too low in the heels. Indeed, they formed a remarkable contrast with his own; for, exclusive of the fashion of the cock, which resembled the form of a Roman galley, the brim of his hat, if properly spread, would have projected a shade sufficient to shelter a whole file of musketeers from the heat of a summer's sun; and the heels of his shoes were so high as to raise his feet three inches at least from the surface of the earth.

Having made these observations, for the credit of his taste, he retired, and returning at the time appointed, accompanied Ferdinand to the apartment of the king, at the doors of which their ears were invaded with a strange sound, being that of a human voice imitating the noise of a drum. The captain,

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hearing this alarm, made a full stop, and, giving the Count to understand that his majesty was busy, begged he would not take it amiss, if the introduction should be delayed for a few moments. Fathom, curious to know the meaning of what he had heard, applied to his guide for information, and learned that the king and the major, whom he had nominated to the post of his general-in-chief, were employed in landing troops upon the Genoese territory; that is, that they were settling beforehand the manner of their disembarkation.

He then, by the direction of his conductor, reconnoitred them through the keyhole, and perceived the sovereign and his minister sitting on opposite sides of a deal board table, covered with a large chart or map, upon which he saw a great number of mussel and oyster shells ranged in a certain order, and, at a little distance, several regular squares and columns made of cards cut in small pieces. The prince himself, whose eyes were reinforced by spectacles, surveyed this armament with great attention, while the general put the whole in action, and conducted their motions by beat of drum. The mussel-shells, according to Minikin's explanation, represented the transports, the oyster-shells were considered as the men-of-war that covered the troops in landing, and the pieces of card exhibited the different bodies into which the army was formed upon its disembarkation.

As an affair of such consequence could not be transacted without opposition, they had provided divers ambuscades, consisting of the enemy, whom they represented by grey peas; and accordingly General

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Macleaver, perceiving the said grey peas marching along shore to attack his forces before they could be drawn up in battalia, thus addressed himself to the oyster-shells, in an audible voice: — "You men-of-war, don't you see the front of the enemy advancing, and the rest of the detachment following out of sight? Arrah! the devil burn you, why don't you come ashore and open your batteries?" So saying, he pushed the shells towards the breach, performed the cannonading with his voice, the grey peas were soon put in confusion, the general was beat, the cards marched forwards in order of battle, and the enemy having retreated with great precipitation, they took possession of their ground without farther difficulty.

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CHAPTER FORTY

HE CONTEMPLATES MAJESTY AND ITS SATELLITES IN ECLIPSE.

THIS expedition being happily finished, General Macleaver put the whole army, navy, transports, and scene of action into a canvas bag, the prince unsaddled his nose, and Captain Minikin being admitted, our hero was introduced in form. Very gracious was the reception he met with from his majesty, who, with a most princely demeanour, welcomed him to court, and even seated him on his right hand, in token of particular regard. True it is, this presence-chamber was not so superb, nor the appearance of the king so magnificent, as to render such an honour intoxicating to any person of our hero's coolness and discretion. In lieu of tapestry, the apartment was hung with halfpenny ballads, a truckle-bed without curtains supplied the place of a canopy, and instead of a crown his majesty wore a woollen night-cap. Yet, in spite of these disadvantages, there was an air of dignity in his deportment, and a nice physiognomist would have perceived something majestic in the features of his countenance.

He was certainly a personage of very prepossessing mien; his manners were engaging, his conversation

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agreeable, and any man whose heart was subject to the meltings of humanity would have deplored his distress, and looked upon him as a most pathetic instance of that miserable reverse to which all human grandeur is exposed. His fall was even greater than that of Belisarius, who, after having obtained many glorious victories over the enemies of his country, is said to have been reduced to such extremity of indigence, that, in his old age, when he was deprived of his eyesight, he sat upon the highway like a common mendicant, imploring the charity of passengers in the piteous exclamation of *Date obolum Belisario;* that is, "Spare a farthing to your poor old soldier Belisarius." I say, this general's disgrace was not so remarkable as that of Theodore, because he was the servant of Justinian, consequently his fortune depended upon the nod of that emperor; whereas the other actually possessed the throne of sovereignty by the best of all titles, namely, the unanimous election of the people over whom he reigned; and attracted the eyes of all Europe, by the efforts he made in breaking the bands of oppression, and vindicating that liberty which is the birthright of man.

The English of former days, alike renowned for generosity and valour, treated those hostile princes, whose fate it was to wear their chains, with such delicacy of benevolence, as even dispelled the horrors of captivity; but their posterity of this refined age feel no compunction at seeing an unfortunate monarch, their former friend, ally, and partisan, languish amidst the miseries of a loathsome jail, for a paltry debt contracted in their own service. But, moralis-

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ing apart, our hero had not long conversed with this extraordinary debtor, who in his present condition assumed no other title than that of Baron, than he perceived in him a spirit of Quixotism, which all his experience, together with the vicissitudes of his fortune, had not been able to overcome. Not that his ideas soared to such a pitch of extravagant hope as that which took possession of his messmates, who frequently quarrelled one with another about the degrees of favour to which they should be entitled after the king's restoration; but he firmly believed that affairs would speedily take such a turn in Italy, as would point out to the English court the expediency of employing him again; and his persuasion seemed to support him against every species of poverty and mortification.

While they were busy in trimming the balance of power on the other side of the Alps, their deliberations were interrupted by the arrival of a scullion, who came to receive their orders touching the bill of fare for dinner, and his majesty found much more difficulty in settling this important concern, than in compromising all the differences between the Emperor and the Queen of Spain. At length, however, General Macleaver undertook the office of purveyor for his prince; Captain Minikin insisted upon treating the Count; and in a little time the table was covered with a cloth, which, for the sake of my delicate readers, I will not attempt to describe.

At this period they were joined by Sir Mungo Barebones, who, having found means to purchase a couple of mutton chops, had cooked a mess of broth,

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which he now brought in a saucepan to the general rendezvous. This was the most remarkable object which had hitherto presented itself to the eyes of Fathom. Being naturally of a meagre habit, he was, by indigence and hard study, wore almost to the bone, and so bended towards the earth, that in walking his body described at least 150 degrees of a circle. The want of stockings and shoes he supplied with a jockey straight boot and an half jack. His thighs and middle were cased in a monstrous pair of brown trunk breeches, which the keeper bought for his use from the executor of a Dutch seaman who had lately died in the jail. His shirt retained no signs of its original colour, his body was shrouded in an old greasy tattered plaid nightgown; a blue and white handkerchief surrounded his head, and his looks betokened that immense load of care which he had voluntarily incurred for the eternal salvation of sinners. Yet this figure, uncouth as it was, made his compliments to our adventurer in terms of the most elegant address, and, in the course of conversation, disclosed a great fund of valuable knowledge. He had appeared in the great world, and borne divers offices of dignity and trust with universal applause. His courage was undoubted, his morals were unimpeached, and his person held in great veneration and esteem; when his evil genius engaged him in the study of Hebrew, and the mysteries of the Jewish religion, which fairly disordered his brain, and rendered him incapable of managing his temporal affairs. When he ought to have been employed in the functions of his post, he was always wrapt in visionary conferences with Moses on

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the Mount; rather than regulate the economy of his household, he chose to exert his endeavours in settling the precise meaning of the word *Elohim*; and having discovered that now the period was come, when the Jews and Gentiles would be converted, he postponed every other consideration, in order to facilitate that great and glorious event.

By this time Ferdinand had seen every member of the club, except the French chevalier, who seemed to be quite neglected by the society; for his name was not once mentioned during this communication, and they sat down to dinner, without asking whether he was dead or alive. The king regaled himself with a plate of ox-cheek; the major, who complained that his appetite had forsaken him, amused himself with some forty hard eggs, malaxed with salt butter; the knight indulged upon his soup and bouilli, and the captain entertained our adventurer with a neck of veal roasted with potatoes; but before Fathom could make use of his knife and fork, he was summoned to the door, where he found the chevalier in great agitation, his eyes sparkling like coals of fire.

Our hero was not a little surprised at this apparition, who, having asked pardon for the freedom he had used, observed, that, understanding the Count was a foreigner, he could not dispense with appealing to him concerning an outrage he had suffered from the keeper, who, without any regard to his rank or misfortunes, had been base enough to refuse him credit for a few necessaries, until he could have a remittance from his steward in France; he therefore conjured Count Fathom, as a stranger and nobleman

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like himself, to be the messenger of defiance, which he resolved to send to that brutal jailor, that, for the future, he might learn to make proper distinctions in the exercise of his function.

Fathom, who had no inclination to offend this choleric Frenchman, assured him that he might depend upon his friendship; and, in the meantime, prevailed upon him to accept of a small supply, in consequence of which he procured a pound of sausages, and joined the rest of the company without delay; making a very suitable addition to such an assemblage of rarities. Though his age did not exceed thirty years, his beard, which was of a brindled hue, flowed down, like Aaron's, to his middle. Upon his legs he wore red stockings rolled up over the joint of the knee, his breeches were of blue drab, with vellum button-holes, and garters of gold lace, his waistcoat of scarlet, his coat of rusty black cloth, his hair, twisted into a ramilie, hung down to his rump, of the colour of jet, and his hat was adorned with a white feather.

This original had formed many ingenious schemes to increase the glory and grandeur of France, but was discouraged by Cardinal Fleury, who, in all appearance, jealous of his great talents, not only rejected his projects, but even sent him to prison, on pretence of being offended at his impertinence. Perceiving that, like the prophet, he had no honour in his own country, he no sooner obtained his release, than he retired to England, where he was prompted by his philanthropy to propose an expedient to our ministry, which would have saved a vast effusion of

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blood and treasure; this was an agreement between the Queen of Hungary and the late Emperor, to decide their pretensions by a single combat; in which case he offered himself as the Bavarian champion; but in this endeavour he also proved unsuccessful. Then turning his attention to the delights of poetry, he became so enamoured of the muse, that he neglected every other consideration, and she as usual gradually conducted him to the author's never-failing goal — a place of rest appointed for all those sinners whom the profane love of poesy hath led astray.

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CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

ONE QUARREL IS COMPROMISED, AND ANOTHER DECIDED BY UNUSUAL ARMS.

AMONG other topics of conversation that were discussed at this genial meeting, Sir Mungo's scheme was brought upon the carpet by his majesty, who was graciously pleased to ask how his subscription filled? To this interrogation the knight answered, that he met with great opposition from a spirit of levity and self-conceit, which seemed to prevail in this generation, but that no difficulties should discourage him from persevering in his duty; and he trusted in God, that, in a very little time, he should be able to confute and overthrow the false philosophy of the moderns, and to restore the writings of Moses to that pre-eminence and veneration which is due to an inspired author. He spoke of the immortal Newton with infinite contempt, and undertook to extract from the Pentateuch a system of chronology which would ascertain the progress of time since the fourth day of the creation to the present hour, with such exactness, that not one vibration of a pendulum should be lost; nay, he affirmed that the perfection of all arts and sciences might be attained by studying these secret memoirs, and that he himself did not despair of

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learning from them the art of transmuting baser metals into gold.

The chevalier, though he did not pretend to contradict these assertions, was too much attached to his own religion to acquiesce in the knight's project of converting the Jews and the Gentiles to the Protestant heresy, which, he said, God Almighty would never suffer to triumph over the interests of his own Holy Catholic Church. This objection produced abundance of altercation between two very unequal disputants; and the Frenchman, finding himself puzzled by the learning of his antagonist, had recourse to the *argumentum ad hominem*, by laying his hand upon his sword, and declaring that he was ready to lose the last drop of his blood in opposition to such a damnable scheme.

Sir Mungo, though in all appearance reduced to the last stage of animal existence, no sooner heard this epithet applied to his plan, than his eyes gleamed like lightning, he sprung from his seat with the agility of a grasshopper, and, darting himself out at the door like an arrow from a bow, reappeared in a moment with a long rusty weapon, which might have been shown among a collection of rarities as the sword of Guy Earl of Warwick. This implement he brandished over the chevalier's head with the dexterity of an old prize-fighter, exclaiming, in the French language, "Thou art a profane wretch marked out for the vengeance of Heaven, whose unworthy minister I am, and here thou shalt fall by the sword of the Lord and of Gideon."

The chevalier, unterrified by this dreadful saluta-

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tion, desired he would accompany him to a more convenient place; and the world might have been deprived of one or both these knights-errant, had not General Macleaver, at the desire of his majesty, interposed, and found means to bring matters to an accommodation.

In the afternoon the society was visited by the major's cousin and her daughters, who no sooner appeared than they were recognised by our adventurer, and his acquaintance with them renewed in such a manner as alarmed the delicacy of Captain Minikin, who in the evening repaired to the Count's apartment, and with a formal physiognomy, accosted him in these words: "Sir, I beg pardon for this intrusion, but I come to consult you about an affair in which my honour is concerned; and a soldier without honour, you know, is no better than a body without a soul. I have always admired that speech of Hotspur in the first part of Henry the Fourth:

> By Heaven, methinks it were an easy leap,
> To pluck bright honour from the pale-fac'd moon;
> Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
> Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
> And pluck up drowned honour by the locks —

There is a boldness and ease in the expression, and the images are very picturesque. But, without any further preamble, pray, sir, give me leave to ask how long you have been acquainted with those ladies who drank tea with us this afternoon. You'll forgive the question, sir, when I tell you that Major Macleaver introduced Mrs. Minikin to them as to

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ladies of character, and, I don't know how, sir, I have a sort of *presentiment* that my wife has been imposed upon. Perhaps I may be mistaken, and God grant I may. But there was a *je ne sais quoi* in their behaviour to-day, which begins to alarm my suspicion. Sir, I have nothing but my reputation to depend upon, and I hope you will excuse me, when I earnestly beg to know what rank they maintain in life."

Fathom, without minding the consequence, told him, with a simper, that he knew them to be very good-natured ladies, who devoted themselves to the happiness of mankind. This explanation had no sooner escaped from his lips, than the captain's face began to glow with indignation, his eyes seemed bursting from their spheres, he swelled to twice his natural dimensions, and, raising himself on his tiptoes, pronounced, in a strain that emulated thunder, "Blood! sir, you seem to make very light of the matter, but it is no joke to me, I'll assure you, and Macleaver shall see that I am not to be affronted with impunity. Sir, I shall take it as a singular favour if you will be the bearer of a billet to him, which I shall write in three words; nay, sir, you must give me leave to insist upon it, as you are the only gentleman of our mess whom I can intrust with an affair of this nature."

Fathom, rather than run the risk of disobliging such a punctilious warrior, after having in vain attempted to dissuade him from his purpose, undertook to carry the challenge, which was immediately penned in these words:

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"Sir, — You have violated my honour in imposing upon Mrs. Minikin your pretended cousins as ladies of virtue and reputation. I therefore demand such satisfaction as a soldier ought to receive, and expect you will adjust with my friend Count Fathom the terms upon which you shall be met by the much injured

"Goliah Minikin."

This morceau being sealed and directed, was forthwith carried by our adventurer to the lodgings of the major, who had by this time retired to rest, but hearing the Count's voice, he got up and opened the door *in cuerpo*, to the astonishment of Ferdinand, who had never before seen such an Herculean figure. He made an apology for receiving the Count in his birthday suit, to which he said he was reduced by the heat of his constitution, though he might have assigned a more adequate cause, by owning that his shirt was in the hands of his washerwoman; then shrouding himself in a blanket, desired to know what had procured him the honour of such an extraordinary visit. He read the letter with great composure, like a man accustomed to such intercourse; then addressing himself to the bearer, "I will be after diverting the gentleman," said he, "in any manner he shall think proper; but, by Jesus, this is no place for such amusements, because, as you well know, my dear Count, if both should be killed by the chance of war, neither of us will be able to escape, and after the breath is out of his body, he will make but a sorry excuse to his family and friends. But that is no concern of mine, and therefore I am ready to please him in his own way."

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Fathom approved of his remarks, which he reinforced with sundry considerations, to the same purpose, and begged the assistance of the major's advice, in finding some expedient to terminate the affair without bloodshed, that no troublesome consequences might ensue either to him or to his antagonist, who, in spite of this overstraining formality, seemed to be a person of worth and good-nature. "With all my heart," said the generous Hibernian, "I have a great regard for the little man, and my own character is not to seek at this time of day. I have served a long apprenticeship to fighting, as this same carcase can testify, and if he compels me to run him through the body, by my shoul, I shall do it in a friendly manner."

So saying, he threw aside the blanket, and displayed scars and seams innumerable upon his body, which appeared like an old patched leathern doublet. "I remember," proceeded this champion, "when I was a slave at Algiers, Murphy Macmorris and I happened to have some difference in the bagnio, upon which he bade me turn out. 'Arra, for what?' said I; 'here are no weapons that a gentleman can use, and you would not be such a negro as to box like an English carman.' After he had puzzled himself for some time, he proposed that we should retire into a corner, and funk one another with brimstone, till one of us should give out. Accordingly we crammed half a dozen tobacco pipes with sulphur, and, setting foot to foot, began to smoke, and kept a constant fire, until Macmorris dropped down; then I threw away my pipe, and taking poor Murphy

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in my arms, 'What, are you dead?' said I; 'if you are dead, speak.' 'No, by Jesus!' cried he, 'I an't dead, but I'm speechless.' So he owned I had obtained the victory, and we were as good friends as ever. Now, if Mr. Minikin thinks proper to put the affair upon the same issue, I will smoke a pipe of brimstone with him to-morrow morning, and if I cry out first, I will be after asking pardon for this supposed affront."

Fathom could not help laughing at the proposal, to which, however, he objected on account of Minikin's delicate constitution, which might suffer more detriment from breathing in an atmosphere of sulphur than from the discharge of a pistol, or the thrust of a small sword. He therefore suggested another expedient in lieu of the sulphur, namely, the gum called *assafœtida*, which, though abundantly nauseous, could have no effect upon the infirm texture of the lieutenant's lungs. This hint being relished by the major, our adventurer returned to his principal, and having repeated the other's arguments against the use of mortal instruments, described the succedaneum which he had concerted with Macleaver. The captain at first believed the scheme was calculated for subjecting him to the ridicule of his fellow-prisoners, and began to storm with great violence; but, by the assurances and address of Fathom, he was at length reconciled to the plan, and preparations were made on each side for this duel, which was actually smoked next day, about noon, in a small closet, detached from the challenger's apartment, and within hearing of his majesty, and all his court, assembled as witnesses and umpires of the contest.

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The combatants, being locked up together, began to ply their engines with great fury, and it was not long before Captain Minikin perceived he had a manifest advantage over his antagonist. For his organs were familiarised to the effluvia of this drug, which he had frequently used in the course of an hypochondriac disorder; whereas Macleaver, who was a stranger to all sorts of medicine, by his wry faces and attempts to puke, expressed the utmost abhorrence of the smell that invaded his nostrils. Nevertheless, resolved to hold out to the last extremity, he continued in action until the closet was filled with such an intolerable vapour as discomposed the whole economy of his entrails, and compelled him to disgorge his breakfast in the face of his opponent, whose nerves were so disconcerted by this disagreeable and unforeseen discharge, that he fell back into his chair in a swoon, and the major bellowed aloud for assistance. The door being opened, he ran directly to the window, to inhale the fresh air, while the captain, recovering from his fit, complained of Macleaver's unfair proceeding, and demanded justice of the arbitrators, who decided in his favour; and the major being prevailed upon to ask pardon for having introduced Mrs. Minikin to women of rotten reputation, the parties were reconciled to each other, and peace and concord re-established in the mess.

Fathom acquired universal applause for his discreet and humane conduct upon this occasion; and that same afternoon had an opportunity of seeing the lady in whose cause he had exerted himself. He was presented to her as the husband's particular friend,

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and when she understood how much she was indebted to his care and concern for the captain's safety, she treated him with uncommon marks of distinction; and he found her a genteel, well-bred woman, not without a good deal of personal charms, and a well-cultivated understanding.

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CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

AN UNEXPECTED RENCONTRE, AND A HAPPY REVOLUTION IN THE AFFAIRS OF OUR ADVENTURER.

AS she did not lodge within the precincts of this garrison, she was one day, after tea, conducted to the gate by the captain and the Count, and just as they approached the turnkey's lodge, our hero's eyes were struck with the apparition of his old companion Renaldo, son of his benefactor and patron, the Count de Melvil. What were the emotions of his soul, when he saw that young gentleman enter the prison, and advance towards him, after having spoke to the jailor! He never doubted that, being informed of his confinement, he was come to upbraid him with his villany and ingratitude, and he in vain endeavoured to recollect himself from that terror and guilty confusion which his appearance had inspired; when the stranger, lifting up his eyes, started back with signs of extreme amazement, and, after a considerable pause, exclaimed, "Heaven and earth! Sure my eyes do not deceive me! is not your name Fathom? It is, it must be my old friend and companion, the loss of whom I have so long regretted!" With these words he ran towards our adventurer, and, while he clasped him in his arms with all the eagerness of affection, pro-

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tested that this was one of the happiest days he had ever seen.

Ferdinand, who, from this salutation, concluded himself still in possession of Renaldo's good opinion, was not deficient in expressions of tenderness and joy; he returned his embraces with equal ardour, the tears trickled down his cheeks, and that perturbation which proceeded from conscious perfidy and fear, was mistaken by the unsuspecting Hungarian for the sheer effects of love, gratitude, and surprise. These first transports having subsided, they adjourned to the lodgings of Fathom, who soon recollected his spirits and invention so well as to amuse the other with a feigned tale of his having been taken by the French, sent prisoner into Champagne, from whence he had written many letters to Count Melvil and his son, of whom he could hear no tidings; of his having contracted an intimacy with a young nobleman of France, who died in the flower of his age, after having, in token of his friendship, bequeathed to him a considerable legacy; by this he had been enabled to visit the land of his forefathers in the character of a gentleman, which he had supported with some figure, until he was betrayed into a misfortune that exhausted his funds, and drove him to the spot where he was now found. And he solemnly declared, that, far from forgetting the obligation he owed to Count Melvil, or renouncing the friendship of Renaldo, he had actually resolved to set out for Germany on his return to the house of his patron in the beginning of the week posterior to that in which he had been arrested.

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Young Melvil, whose own heart had never known the instigations of fraud, implicitly believed the story and protestations of Fathom; and though he would not justify that part of his conduct by which the term of his good fortune was abridged, he could not help excusing an indiscretion into which he had been hurried by the precipitancy of youth, and the allurements of an artful woman. Nay, with the utmost warmth of friendship, he undertook to wait upon Trapwell, and endeavour to soften him into some reasonable terms of composition.

Fathom seemed to be quite overwhelmed with a deep sense of all this goodness, and affected the most eager impatience to know the particulars of Renaldo's fate, since their unhappy separation, more especially his errand to this uncomfortable place, which he should henceforth revere as the providential scene of their reunion. Nor did he forget to inquire, in the most affectionate and dutiful manner, about the situation of his noble parents and amiable sister.

At mention of these names, Renaldo, fetching a deep sigh, "Alas! my friend," said he, "the Count is no more; and, what aggravates my affliction for the loss of such a father, it was my misfortune to be under his displeasure at the time of his death. Had I been present on that melancholy occasion, so well I knew his generosity and paternal tenderness, that, sure I am, he would in his last moments have forgiven an only son, whose life had been a continual effort to render himself worthy of such a parent, and whose crime was no other than an honourable passion

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for the most meritorious of her sex. But I was removed at a fatal distance from him, and doubtless my conduct must have been invidiously misrepresented. Be that as it will, my mother has again given her hand in wedlock to Count Trebasi; by whom I have the mortification to be informed that I am totally excluded from my father's succession; and I learn from other quarters, that my sister is barbarously treated by this inhuman father-in-law. Grant, Heaven, I may soon have an opportunity of expostulating with the tyrant upon that subject."

So saying, his cheeks glowed, and his eyes lightened with resentment. Then he thus proceeded: "My coming hither to-day was with a view to visit a poor female relation, from whom I yesterday received a letter, describing her most deplorable situation, and soliciting my assistance; but the turnkey affirms that there is no such person in the jail, and I was on my way to consult the keeper, when I was agreeably surprised with the sight of my dear Fathom."

Our adventurer having wiped from his eyes the tears which were produced by the news of his worthy patron's death, desired to know the name of that afflicted prisoner, in whose behalf he interested himself so much, and Renaldo produced the letter, subscribed, "Your unfortunate cousin, Helen Melvil." This pretended relation, after having explained the degree of consanguinity which she and the Count stood in to each other, and occasionally mentioned some anecdotes of the family in Scotland, gave him to understand that she had married a merchant of

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London, who, by repeated losses in trade, had been reduced to indigence, and afterwards confined to prison, where he then lay a breathless corpse, having left her in the utmost extremity of wretchedness and want, with two young children in the smallpox, and an incurable cancer in one of her own breasts. Indeed, the picture she drew was so moving, and her expressions so sensibly pathetic, that no person, whose heart was not altogether callous, could peruse it without emotion. Renaldo had sent two guineas by the messenger, whom she had represented as a trusty servant, whose fidelity had been proof against all the distress of her mistress; and he was now arrived in order to reinforce his bounty.

Fathom, in the consciousness of his own practices, immediately comprehended the scheme of this letter, and confidently assured him that no such person resided in the prison or in any other place. And when his friend applied for information to the keeper, these assurances were confirmed; and that stern janitor told him he had been imposed upon by a stale trick, which was often practised upon strangers by a set of sharpers, who make it their business to pick up hints of intelligence relating to private families, upon which they build such superstructures of fraud and imposition.

However piqued the young Hungarian might be to find himself duped in this manner, he rejoiced at the occasion which had thrown Fathom in his way; and, after having made him a tender of his purse, took his leave, on purpose to wait upon Trapwell, who was not quite so untractable as an enraged cuckold

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commonly is; for, by this time, he had accomplished the best part of his aim, which was to be divorced from his wife, and was fully convinced that the defendant was no more than a needy adventurer, who, in all probability, would be released by an act of parliament for the benefit of insolvent debtors; in which case, he, the plaintiff, would reap no solid advantage from his imprisonment.

He, therefore, listened to the remonstrances of the mediator, and, after much canvassing, agreed to discharge the defendant, in consideration of two hundred pounds, which were immediately paid by Count Melvil, who, by this deduction, was reduced to somewhat less than thirty.

Nevertheless, he cheerfully beggared himself in behalf of his friend, for whose release he forthwith obtained an order; and, next day, our adventurer, having bid a formal adieu to his fellows in distress, and, in particular, to his majesty, for whose restoration his prayers were preferred, he quitted the jail, and accompanied his deliverer, with all the outward marks of unutterable gratitude and esteem.

Surely, if his heart had been made of *penetrable stuff*, it would have been touched by the circumstances of this redemption; but had not his soul been invincible to all such attacks, these memoirs would possibly never have seen the light.

When they arrived at Renaldo's lodgings, that young gentleman honoured him with other proofs of confidence and friendship, by giving him a circumstantial detail of all the adventures in which he had been engaged after Fathom's desertion from the

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imperial camp. He told him, that, immediately after the war was finished, his father had pressed him to a very advantageous match, with which he would have complied, though his heart was not at all concerned, had not he been inflamed with the desire of seeing the world before he could take any step towards a settlement for life. That he had signified his sentiments on this head to the Count, who opposed them with unusual obstinacy, as productive of a delay which might be fatal to his proposal; for which reason he had retired *incognito* from his family, and travelled through sundry states and countries, in a disguise by which he eluded the inquiries of his parents.

That, in the course of these peregrinations, he was captivated by the irresistible charms of a young lady, on whose heart he had the good fortune to make a tender impression. That their mutual love had subjected both to many dangers and difficulties, during which they suffered a cruel separation; after the torments of which, he had happily found her in England, where she now lived entirely cut off from her native country and connexions, and destitute of every other resource but his honour, love, and protection. And, finally, that he was determined to combat his own desires, how violent soever they might be, until he should have made some suitable provision for the consequences of a stricter union with the mistress of his soul, that he might not, by a precipitate marriage, ruin the person whom he adored.

This end he proposed to attain, by an application to the court of Vienna, which he did not doubt would

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have some regard to his own service, and that of his father; and thither he resolved to repair, with the first opportunity, now that he had found a friend with whom he could intrust the inestimable jewel of his heart.

He likewise gave our hero to understand, that he had been eight months in England, during which he had lived in a frugal manner, that he might not unnecessarily exhaust the money he had been able to raise upon his own credit; that, hitherto, he had been obliged to defer his departure for Germany, on account of his attendance upon the mother of his mistress, who was lately dead of sorrow and chagrin; and that, since he resided in London, he had often heard of the celebrated Count Fathom, though he never imagined that his friend Ferdinand could be distinguished by that appellation.

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CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

FATHOM JUSTIFIES THE PROVERB, "WHAT'S BRED IN THE BONE WILL NEVER COME OUT OF THE FLESH."

SOME circumstances of this conversation made a deep impression upon the mind of our adventurer, who nevertheless concealed his emotions from the knowledge of his friend, and was next day introduced to that hidden treasure of which Renaldo had spoken with such rapture and adoration. It was not without reason he had expatiated upon the personal attractions of this young lady, whom, for the present, we shall call Monimia, a name that implies her orphan situation. When she entered the room, even Fathom, whose eyes had been sated with beauty, was struck dumb with admiration, and could scarce recollect himself so far as to perform the ceremony of his introduction.

She seemed to be about the age of eighteen. Her stature was tall; her motion graceful. A knot of artificial flowers restrained the luxuriancy of her fine black hair, that flowed in shining ringlets adown her snowy neck. The contour of her face was oval; her forehead remarkably high; her complexion clean and delicate, though not florid; and her eyes were so piercing, as to strike the soul of every beholder.

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Yet, upon this occasion, one half of their vivacity was eclipsed by a languishing air of melancholy concern; which, while it in a manner sheathed the edge of her beauty, added a most engaging sweetness to her looks. In short, every feature was elegantly perfect; and the harmony of the whole ravishing and delightful.

It was easy to perceive the mutual sentiments of the two lovers at meeting, by the pleasure that sensibly diffused itself in the countenances of both. Fathom was received by her as the intimate friend of her admirer, whom she had often heard of in terms of the most sincere affection; and the conversation was carried on in the Italian language, because she was a foreigner who had not as yet made great proficiency in the knowledge of the English tongue. Her understanding was such as, instead of diminishing, reinforced the prepossession which was inspired by her appearance; and if the sum-total of her charms could not melt the heart, it at least excited the appetite of Fathom to such a degree, that he gazed upon her with such violence of desire, as had never transported him before; and he instantly began to harbour thoughts, not only destructive to the peace of his generous patron, but also to the prudential maxims he had adopted on his first entrance into life.

We have already recorded divers instances of his conduct to prove that there was an intemperance in his blood, which often interfered with his caution; and although he had found means to render this heat sometimes subservient to his interest, yet, in all

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probability, Heaven mingled the ingredient in his constitution, on purpose to counteract his consummate craft, defeat the villany of his intention, and at least expose him to the justice of the law, and the contempt of his fellow-creatures.

Stimulated as he was by the beauty of the incomparable Monimia, he foresaw that the conquest of her heart would cost him a thousand times more labour and address than all the victories he had ever achieved; for, besides her superior understanding, her sentiments of honour, virtue, gratitude, religion, and pride of birth, her heart was already engaged by the tenderest ties of love and obligation, to a man whose person and acquired accomplishments at least equalled his own; and whose connexion with him was of such a nature as raised an almost insurmountable bar to his design; because, with what face could he commence rival to the person whose family had raised him from want and servility, and whose own generosity had rescued him from the miseries of a dreary gaol?

Notwithstanding these reflections, he would not lay aside an idea which so agreeably flattered his imagination. He, like every other projector in the same circumstances, was so partial to his own qualifications, as to think the lady would soon perceive a difference between him and Renaldo that could not fail to turn to his advantage in her opinion. He depended a good deal on the levity and inconstancy of the sex; and did not doubt that, in the course of their acquaintance, he should profit by that languor which often creeps upon and flattens the intercourse

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of lovers cloyed with the sight and conversation of each other.

This way of arguing was very natural to a man who had never known other motives than those of sensuality and convenience; and perhaps, upon these maxims, he might have succeeded with nine-tenths of the fair sex. But, for once, he erred in his calculation; Monimia's soul was perfect, her virtue impregnable. His first approaches were, as usual, performed by the method of insinuation, which succeeded so well, that in a few days he actually acquired a very distinguished share of her favour and esteem. To this he had been recommended, in the warmest strain of exaggerating friendship, by her dear Renaldo; so that, placing the most unreserved confidence in his honour and integrity, and being almost quite destitute of acquaintance, she made no scruple of owning herself pleased with his company and conversation; and therefore he was never abridged in point of opportunity. She had too much discernment to overlook his uncommon talents and agreeable address, and too much susceptibility to observe them with indifference. She not only regarded him as the confidant of her lover, but admired him as a person whose attachment did honour to Count Melvil's choice. She found his discourse remarkably entertaining, his politeness dignified with an air of uncommon sincerity, and she was ravished with his skill in music, an art of which she was deeply enamoured.

While he thus ingratiated himself with the fair Monimia, Renaldo rejoiced at their intimacy, being

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extremely happy in the thought of having found a friend who could amuse and protect the dear creature in his absence. That she might be the better prepared for the temporary separation which he meditated, he began to be less frequent in his visits, or rather to interrupt, by gradual intermissions, the constant attendance he had bestowed upon her since her mother's death. This alteration she was enabled to bear by the assiduities of Fathom, when she understood that her lover was indispensably employed in negotiating a sum of money for the purposes of his intended voyage. This was really the case; for, as the reader hath been already informed, the provision he had made for that emergency was expended in behalf of our adventurer; and the persons of whom he had borrowed it, far from approving of the use to which it was put, and accommodating him with a fresh supply, reproached him with his benevolence as an act of dishonesty to them; and, instead of favouring this second application, threatened to distress him for what he had already received. While he endeavoured to surmount these difficulties, his small reversion was quite exhausted, and he saw himself on the brink of wanting the common necessaries of life.

There was no difficulty which he could not have encountered with fortitude, had he alone been concerned. But his affection and regard for Monimia were of such a delicate nature, that, far from being able to bear the prospect of her wanting the least convenience, he could not endure that she should suspect her situation cost him a moment's perplexity;

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because he foresaw it would wring her gentle heart with unspeakable anguish and vexation. This, therefore, he endeavoured to anticipate by expressions of confidence in the Emperor's equity, and frequent declarations touching the goodness and security of that credit from which he derived his present subsistence.

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CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

ANECDOTES OF POVERTY, AND EXPERIMENTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

HIS affairs being thus circumstanced, it is not to be supposed that he passed his time in tranquillity. Every day ushered in new demands and fresh anxiety; for though his economy was frugal, it could not be supported without money; and now not only his funds were drained, but also his private friends tired of relieving his domestic necessities; nay, they began to relinquish his company, which formerly they had coveted; and those who still favoured him with their company embittered that favour with disagreeable advice, mingled with impertinent reproof. They loudly exclaimed against the last instance of his friendship for Fathom, as a piece of wrong-headed extravagance, which neither his fortune could afford nor his conscience excuse; and alleged that such specimens of generosity are vicious in any man, let his finances be never so opulent, if he has any relations of his own who need his assistance; but altogether scandalous, not to say unjust, in a person who depends for his own support on the favour of his friends.

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These expostulations did not even respect the beauteous, the accomplished, the gentle-hearted, the orphan Monimia. Although they owned her perfections, and did not deny that it would be highly meritorious in any man of fortune to make her happy, they disapproved of Renaldo's attachment to the fair beggar, made light of that intimate union of hearts which subsisted between the two lovers, and which no human consideration could dissolve; and some among them, in the consummation of their prudence, ventured to hint a proposal of providing for her in the service of some lady of fashion.

Any reader of sensibility will easily conceive how these admonitions were relished by a young gentleman whose pride was indomitable, whose notions of honour were scrupulously rigid and romantic, whose temper was warm, and whose love was intense. Every such suggestion was as a dagger to his soul; and what rendered the torture more exquisite, he lay under obligations to those very persons whose selfish and sordid sentiments he disdained; so that he was restricted by gratitude from giving vent to his indignation, and his forlorn circumstances would not permit him to renounce their acquaintance. While he struggled with these mortifications, his wants grew more and more importunate, and his creditors became clamorous.

Fathom, to whom all his grievances were disclosed, lamented his hard hap with all the demonstrations of sympathy which he could expect to find in such a zealous adherent. He upbraided himself incessantly as the cause of his patron's distress; took God to

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witness that he would rather have perished in gaol than have enjoyed his liberty, had he known it would have cost his dearest friend and benefactor one-tenth part of the anguish he now saw him suffer; and, in conclusion, the fervency of his affection glowed to such a degree, that he offered to beg, steal, or plunder on the highway, for Renaldo's assistance.

Certain it is, he might have recollected a less disagreeable expedient than any of these to alleviate the pangs of this unhappy lover; for, at that very period he was possessed of money and moveables to the amount of a much greater sum than that which was necessary to remove the severest pangs of the Count's misfortune. But, whether he did not reflect upon this resource, or was willing to let Melvil be better acquainted with adversity, which is the great school of life, I shall leave the reader to determine. Yet, so far was he from supplying the wants of the young Hungarian, that he did not scruple to receive a share of the miserable pittance which that gentleman made shift to extort from the complaisance of a few companions, whose countenance he still enjoyed.

Renaldo's life was now become a sacrifice to the most poignant distress. Almost his whole time was engrossed by a double scheme, comprehending his efforts to render his departure practicable, and his expedients for raising the means of daily bread. With regard to the first, he exerted himself among a set of merchants, some of whom knew his family and expectations; and, for the last, he was fain to depend upon the assistance of a few intimates, who were not in a condition to furnish him with sums of

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consequence. These, however, gradually dropped off, on pretence of friendly resentment for his indiscreet conduct; so that he found himself naked and deserted by all his former companions, except one gentleman, with whom he had lived in the most unreserved correspondence, as with a person of the warmest friendship, and the most unbounded benevolence; nay, he had actually experienced repeated proofs of his generosity; and such were the Count's sentiments of the gratitude, love, and esteem, which were due to the author of these obligations, that he would have willingly laid down his own life for his interest or advantage. He had already been at different times accommodated by this benefactor with occasional supplies, amounting in the whole to about forty or fifty pounds; and so fearful was he of taking any step by which he might forfeit the goodwill of this gentleman, that he struggled with unparelleled difficulty and vexation, before he could prevail upon himself to put his liberality to another proof.

What maxims of delicacy will not the dire calls of necessity infringe! Reduced to the alternative of applying once more to that beneficence which had never failed him, or of seeing Monimia starve, he chose the first, as of two evils the least, and intrusted Fathom with a letter explaining the bitterness of his case. It was not without trepidation that he received in the evening from his messenger an answer to this billet; but what were his pangs when he learned the contents! The gentleman, after having professed himself Melvil's sincere well-wisher, gave him to understand, that he was resolved for the future to

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detach himself from every correspondence which would be inconvenient for him to maintain; that he considered his intimacy with the Count in that light; yet, nevertheless, if his distress was really as great as he had described it, he would still contribute something towards his relief; and accordingly had sent by the bearer five guineas for that purpose; but desired him to take notice, that, in so doing, he laid himself under some difficulty.

Renaldo's grief and mortification at this disappointment were unspeakable. He now saw demolished the last screen betwixt him and the extremity of indigence and woe; he beheld the mistress of his soul abandoned to the bleakest scenes of poverty and want; and he deeply resented the lofty strain of the letter, by which he conceived himself treated as a worthless spendthrift and importunate beggar. Though his purse was exhausted to the last shilling; though he was surrounded with necessities and demands, and knew not how to provide another meal for his fair dependent, he, in opposition to all the suggestions and eloquence of Fathom, despatched him with the money and another billet, intimating, in the most respectful terms, that he approved of his friend's new-adopted maxim, which, for the future, he should always take care to remember; and that he had sent back the last instance of his bounty, as a proof how little he was disposed to incommode his benefactor.

This letter, though sincerely meant, and written in a very serious mood, the gentleman considered as an ungrateful piece of irony, and in that opinion

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complained to several persons of the Count's acquaintance, who unanimously exclaimed against him as a sordid, unthankful, and profligate knave, that abused and reviled those very people who had generously befriended him, whenever they found it inconvenient to nourish his extravagance with further supplies. Notwithstanding these accumulated oppressions, he still persevered with fortitude in his endeavours to disentangle himself from this maze of misery. To these he was encouraged by a letter which about this time he received from his sister, importing, that she had good reason to believe the real will of her father had been suppressed for certain sinister views; and desiring him to hasten his departure for Hungary, where he would still find some friends who were both able and willing to support his cause. He had some trinkets left; the pawnbroker's shop was still open; and hitherto he made shift to conceal from Monimia the extent of his affliction.

The money-broker whom he employed, after having amused him with a variety of schemes, which served no other purpose than that of protracting his own job, at length undertook to make him acquainted with a set of monied men who had been very venturous in lending sums upon personal security; he was therefore introduced to their club in the most favourable manner, after the broker had endeavoured to prepossess them separately, with magnificent ideas of his family and fortune. — By means of this anticipation he was received with a manifest relaxation of that severity which people of this class mingle in their aspects to the world in general; and they even

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vied with each other in their demonstrations of hospitality and respect; for every one in particular looked upon him as a young heir, who would bleed freely, and mortgage at cent. per cent.

Renaldo, buoyed up with these exterior civilities, began to flatter himself with hopes of success, which, however, were soon checked by the nature of the conversation; during which the chairman upbraided one of the members in open club for having once lent forty pounds upon slight security. The person accused alleged, in his own defence, that the borrower was his own kinsman, whose funds he knew to be sufficient; that he had granted his bond, and been at the expense of insuring his life for the money; and, in conclusion, had discharged it to the day with great punctuality. These allegations were not deemed exculpatory by the rest of the assembly, who with one voice pronounced him guilty of unwarrantable rashness and indiscretion, which, in time coming, must undoubtedly operate to the prejudice of his character and credit.

This was a bitter declaration to the young Count, who nevertheless endeavoured to improve the footing he had gained among them, by courting their company, conforming to their manners, and attentively listening to their discourse. When he had cultivated them with great assiduity for the space of some weeks, dined at their houses upon pressing invitations, and received repeated offers of service and friendship, believing that things were now ripe for the purpose, he, one day, at a tavern to which he had invited him to dinner, ventured to disclose his

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situation to him whose countenance was the least unpromising; and as he introduced the business with a proposal of borrowing money, he perceived his eyes sparkle with a visible alacrity, from which he drew a happy presage. But, alas! this was no more than a transient gleam of sunshine, which was suddenly obumbrated by the sequel of his explanation; insomuch, that, when the merchant understood the nature of the security, his visage was involved in a most disagreeable gloom, and his eyes distorted into a most hideous obliquity of vision; indeed, he squinted so horribly, that Renaldo was amazed and almost affrighted at his looks, until he perceived that this distortion proceeded from concern for a silver tobacco box which he had laid down by him on the table, after having filled his pipe. As the youth proceeded to unfold his necessities, the other became gradually alarmed for this utensil, to which he darted his eyes askance in this preternatural direction, until he had slyly secured it in his pocket.

Having made this successful conveyance, he shifted his eyes alternately from the young gentleman to the broker for a considerable pause, during which he in silence reproached the last for introducing such a beggarly varlet to his acquaintance; then taking the pipe from his mouth, "Sir," said he, addressing himself to the Count, "if I had all the inclination in the world to comply with your proposal, it is really not in my power. My correspondents abroad have remitted such a number of bad bills of late, that all my running cash hath been exhausted in supporting their credit. Mr. Ferret, sure I am, you was not

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ignorant of my situation; and I 'm not a little surprised that you should bring the gentleman to me on business of this kind; but, as the wise man observes, *Bray a fool in a mortar, and he 'll never be wise.*" So saying, with a most emphatic glance directed to the broker, he rung the bell, and called for the reckoning; when, finding that he was to be the guest of Renaldo, he thanked him drily for his good cheer, and in an abrupt manner took himself away.

Though baffled in this quarter, the young gentleman would not despair; but forthwith employed Mr. Ferret in an application to another of the society; who, after having heard the terms of his commission, desired him to tell his principal, that he could do nothing without the concurrence of his partner, who happened to be at that time in one of our American plantations. A third being solicited, excused himself on account of an oath which he had lately taken on the back of a considerable loss. A fourth being tried, made answer, that it was not in his way. And a fifth candidly owned, that he never lent money without proper security.

Thus the forlorn Renaldo tried every experiment without success, and now saw the last ray of hope extinguished. Well-nigh destitute of present support, and encompassed with unrelenting duns, he was obliged to keep within doors, and seek some comfort in the conversation of his charming mistress, and his faithful friend; yet, even there, he experienced the extremest rigour of adverse fate. Every rap at the door alarmed him with the expectation of some

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noisy tradesman demanding payment. When he endeavoured to amuse himself with drawing, some unlucky feature of the occasional portrait recalled the image of an obdurate creditor, and made him tremble at the work of his own hands. When he fled for shelter to the flattering creation of fancy, some abhorred idea always started up amidst the gay vision, and dissolved the pleasing enchantment. — Even the seraphic voice of Monimia had no longer power to compose the anxious tumults of his mind. Every song she warbled, every tune she played, recalled to his remembrance some scene of love and happiness elapsed; and overwhelmed his soul with the woful comparison of past and present fate. He saw all that was amiable and perfect in woman, all that he held most dear and sacred upon earth, tottering on the brink of misery, without knowing the danger of her situation, and found himself unable to prevent her fall, or even to forewarn her of the peril; for as we have already observed, his soul could not brook the thought of communicating the tidings of distress to the tender-hearted Monimia.

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CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

RENALDO'S DISTRESS DEEPENS, AND FATHOM'S PLOT THICKENS.

SUCH aggravated misfortune could not fail to affect his temper and deportment. The continual efforts he made to conceal his vexation produced a manifest distraction in his behaviour and discourse. He began to be seized with horror at the sight of poor Monimia, whom he therefore shunned as much as the circumstances of their correspondence would allow; and every evening he went forth alone to some solitary place, where he could, unperceived, give a loose to the transports of his sorrow, and in silence meditate some means to lighten the burden of his woe. His heart was sometimes so savaged with despair, which represented mankind as his inveterate enemies, that he entertained thoughts of denouncing war against the whole community, and supplying his own wants with the spoils he should win. At other times he was tempted with the desire of putting an end to his miseries and life together. Yet these were but the transitory suggestions of temporary madness, that soon yielded to the dictates of reason. From the execution of the first he was restrained by his own notions of honour and morality; and, from

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using the other expedient, he was deterred by his love for Monimia, together with the motives of philosophy and religion.

While in this manner he secretly nursed the worm of grief that preyed upon his vitals, the alteration in his countenance and conduct did not escape the eyes of that discerning young lady. She was alarmed at the change, yet afraid to inquire into the source of it; for, being ignorant of his distress, she could impute it to no cause in which her happiness was not deeply interested. She had observed his strained complaisance and extraordinary emotion. She had detected him in repeated attempts to avoid her company, and taken notice of his regular excursions in the dark. These were alarming symptoms to a lover of her delicacy and pride. She strove in vain to put the most favourable construction on what she saw; and, finally, imputed the effects of his despondence to the alienation of his heart. Made miserable beyond expression by these suspicions, she imparted them to Fathom, who, by this time, was in full possession of her confidence and esteem, and implored his advice touching her conduct in such a nice conjuncture.

This artful politician, who rejoiced at the effect of her penetration, no sooner heard himself questioned on the subject, than he gave tokens of surprise and confusion, signifying his concern to find she had discovered what, for the honour of his friend, he wished had never come to light. His behaviour on this occasion confirmed her fatal conjecture; and she conjured him, in the most pathetic manner, to tell

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her if he thought Renaldo's heart had contracted any new engagement. At this question, he started with signs of extreme agitation, and stifling an artificial sigh, "Sure, madam," said he, "you cannot doubt the Count's constancy — I am confident — he is certainly — I protest, madam, I am so shocked."

Here he made a full pause, as if the conflict between his integrity and his friendship would not allow him to proceed, and summoned the moisture into either eye — "Then are my doubts removed," cried the afflicted Monimia; "I see your candour in the midst of your attachment to Renaldo; and will no longer torment you with impertinent interrogations and vain complaints." With these words, a flood of tears gushed from her enchanting eyes, and she instantly withdrew into her own apartment, where she indulged her sorrow to excess. Nor was her grief unanimated with resentment. She was by birth, nature, and education inspired with that dignity of pride which ennobles the human heart; and this, by the circumstance of her present dependence, was rendered extremely jealous and susceptible; insomuch that she could not brook the least shadow of indifference, much less an injury of such a nature, from the man whom she had honoured with her affections, and for whom she had disobliged and deserted her family and friends.

Though her love was so unalterably fixed on this unhappy youth, that, without the continuation of reciprocal regard, her life would have become an unsupportable burden, even amidst all the splendour of affluence and pomp; and although she foresaw, that,

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when his protection should cease, she must be left a wretched orphan in a foreign land, exposed to all the miseries of want; yet, such was the loftiness of her displeasure, that she disdained to complain, or even demand an explanation from the supposed author of her wrongs.

While she continued undetermined in her purpose, and fluctuating on this sea of torture, Fathom, believing that now was the season for working upon her passions, while they were all in commotion, became, if possible, more assiduous than ever about the fair mourner, modelled his features into a melancholy cast, pretended to share her distress with the most emphatic sympathy, and endeavoured to keep her resentment glowing by cunning insinuations, which, though apparently designed to apologise for his friend, served only to aggravate the guilt of his perfidy and dishonour. This pretext of friendly concern is the most effectual vehicle for the conveyance of malice and slander; and a man's reputation is never so mortally stabbed, as when the assassin begins with the preamble of, "For my own part, I can safely say that no man upon earth has a greater regard for him than I have; and it is with the utmost anguish and concern that I see him misbehave in such a manner." Then he proceeds to mangle his character, and the good-natured hearers, concluding he is even blacker than he is represented, on the supposition that the most atrocious circumstances are softened or suppressed by the tenderness or friendship of the accuser, exclaim, "Good lack! what a wretch he must be, when his best friends will no

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longer attempt to defend him!" Nay, sometimes these well-wishers undertake his defence, and treacherously betray the cause they have espoused, by omitting the reasons that may be urged in his vindication.

Both these methods were practised by the wily Ferdinand, according to the predominant passion of Monimia. When her indignation prevailed, he expatiated upon his love and sincere regard for Renaldo, which, he said, had grown up from the cradle, to such a degree of fervour, that he would willingly part with life for his advantage. He shed tears for his apostasy; but every drop made an indelible stain upon his character; and, in the bitterness of his grief, swore, notwithstanding his fondness for Renaldo, which had become a part of his constitution, that the young Hungarian deserved the most infamous destiny for having injured such perfection. At other times, when he found her melted into silent sorrow, he affected to excuse the conduct of his friend. He informed her, that the young gentleman's temper had been uneven from his infancy; that frailty was natural to man; that he might in time be reclaimed by self-conviction; he even hinted, that she might have probably ascribed to inconstancy, what was really the effect of some chagrin which he industriously concealed from his participation. But, when he found her disposed to listen to this last suggestion, he destroyed the force of it, by recollecting the circumstances of his nocturnal rambles, which, he owned, would admit of no favourable construction.

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By these means he blew the coals of her jealousy, and enhanced the value of his own character at the same time; for she looked upon him as a mirror of faith and integrity, and the mind being overcharged with woe, naturally seeks some confidant, upon whose sympathy it can repose itself. Indeed, his great aim was to make himself necessary to her affliction, and settle a gossiping correspondence, in the familiarity of which he hoped his purpose would certainly be answered.

Yet the exertion of these talents was not limited to her alone. While he laid these trains for the hapless young lady, he was preparing snares of another kind for her unsuspecting lover, who, for the completion of his misery, about this time began to perceive marks of disquiet and displeasure in the countenance and deportment of his adored Monimia. For that young lady, in the midst of her grief, remembered her origin, and over her vexation affected to throw a veil of tranquillity, which served only to give an air of disgust to her internal disturbance.

Renaldo, whose patience and philosophy were barely sufficient to bear the load of his other evils, would have been quite overwhelmed with the additional burden of Monimia's woe, if it had not assumed this appearance of disesteem, which, as he knew he had not deserved it, brought his resentment to his assistance. Yet this was but a wretched cordial to support him against the baleful reflections that assaulted him from every quarter; it operated like those desperate remedies, which, while they stimulate exhausted nature, help to destroy the very

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fundamentals of the constitution. He reviewed his own conduct with the utmost severity, and could not recollect one circumstance which could justly offend the idol of his soul. The more blameless he appeared to himself in this examination, the less excusable did her behaviour appear. He tasked his penetration to discover the cause of this alteration; he burned with impatience to know it; his discernment failed him, and he was afraid, though he knew not why, to demand an explanation. His thoughts were so circumstanced, that he durst not even unbosom himself to Fathom, though his own virtue and friendship resisted those sentiments that began to intrude upon his mind, with suggestions to the prejudice of our adventurer's fidelity.

Nevertheless, unable to endure the torments of such interesting suspense, he at length made an effort to expostulate with the fair orphan; and in an abrupt address, the effect of his fear and confusion, begged to know if he had inadvertently done anything to incur her displeasure. Monimia, hearing herself bluntly accosted in this unusual strain, after repeated instances of his reserve and supposed inconstancy, considered the question as a fresh insult, and, summoning her whole pride to her assistance, replied, with affected tranquillity, or rather with an air of scorn, that she had no title to judge, neither did she pretend to condemn his conduct. This answer, so wide of that tenderness and concern which had hitherto manifested itself in the disposition of his amiable mistress, deprived him of all power to carry on the conversation, and he retired with a low bow, fully convinced

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of his having irretrievably lost the place he had possessed in her affection; for, to his imagination, warped and blinded by his misfortunes, her demeanour seemed fraught, not with a transient gleam of anger, which a respectful lover would soon have appeased, but with that contempt and indifference which denote a total absence of affection and esteem. She, on the other hand, misconstrued his sudden retreat; and now they beheld the actions of each other through the false medium of prejudice and resentment. To such fatal misunderstandings the peace and happiness of whole families often fall a sacrifice.

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CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

OUR ADVENTURER BECOMES ABSOLUTE IN HIS POWER OVER THE PASSIONS OF HIS FRIEND, AND EFFECTS ONE HALF OF HIS AIM.

INFLUENCED by this dire mistake, the breast of those unhappy lovers began to be invaded with the horrors of jealousy. The tender-hearted Monimia endeavoured to devour her griefs in silence; she in secret bemoaned her forlorn fate without ceasing; her tears flowed without intermission from night to morn, and from morn to night. She sought not to know the object for which she was forsaken; she meant not to upbraid her undoer; her aim was to find a sequestered corner, in which she could indulge her sorrow; where she could brood over the melancholy remembrance of her former felicity; where she could recollect those happy scenes she had enjoyed under the wings of her indulgent parents, when her whole life was a revolution of pleasures, and she was surrounded with affluence, pomp, and admiration; where she could, unmolested, dwell upon the wretched comparison between her past and present condition, and paint every circumstance of her misery in the most aggravating colours, that they might make the deeper impression upon her mind, and the more speedily contribute to that

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dissolution for which she ardently wished, as a total release from woe.

Amidst these pinings, she began to loathe all sustenance; her cheeks grew wan, her bright eyes lost their splendour, the roses vanished from her lips, and her delicate limbs could hardly support their burden; in a word, her sole consolation was limited to the prospect of depositing her sorrows in the grave; and her only wish was to procure a retreat in which she might wait with resignation for that happy period. Yet this melancholy comfort she could not obtain without the advice and mediation of Fathom, whom she therefore still continued to see and consult. While these consultations were held, Renaldo's bosom was ravaged with tempests of rage and distraction. He believed himself superseded in the affection of his mistress, by some favoured rival, whose success rankled at his soul; and though he scarce durst communicate the suspicion to his own heart, his observation continually whispered to him that he was supplanted by his friend Fathom; for Monimia was totally detached from the conversation of every other man, and he had of late noted their intercourse with distempered eyes.

These considerations sometimes transported him to such a degree of frenzy, that he was tempted to sacrifice them both as traitors to gratitude, friendship, and love; but such deliriums soon vanished before his honour and humanity. He would not allow himself to think amiss of Ferdinand, until some undoubted mark of his guilt should appear; and this was so far from being the case, that hitherto there was scarce a

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presumption. "On the contrary," said he to himself, "I am hourly receiving proofs of his sympathy and attachment. Not but that he may be the innocent cause of my mishap. His superior qualifications may have attracted the eye, and engaged the heart of that inconstant fair, without his being sensible of the victory he has won; or, perhaps, shocked at the conquest he hath unwillingly made, he discourages her advances, tries to reason down her unjustifiable passion, and in the meantime conceals from me the particulars, out of regard to my happiness and quiet."

Under cover of these favourable conjectures, our adventurer securely prosecuted his scheme upon the unfortunate Monimia. He dedicated himself wholly to her service and conversation, except at those times when his company was requested by Renaldo, who now very seldom exacted his attendance. In his ministry about the person of the beauteous orphan, this cunning incendiary mingled such awful regard, such melting compassion, as effectually screened him from the suspicion of treachery, while he widened the fatal breach between her and her lover by the most diabolical insinuations. He represented his friend as a voluptuary, who gratified his own appetite without the least regard to honour or conscience; and, with a show of infinite reluctance, imparted some anecdotes of his sensuality, which he had feigned for the purpose; then he would exclaim in an affected transport, "Gracious Heaven! is it possible for any man who has the least title to perception or humanity to injure such innocence and perfection! for my

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own part, had I been so undeservedly happy —— Heaven and earth! forgive my transports, madam, I cannot help seeing and admiring such divine attractions. I cannot help resenting your wrongs; it is the cause of virtue I espouse; it ought to be the cause of every honest man."

He had often repeated such apostrophes as these, which she ascribed to nothing else than sheer benevolence and virtuous indignation, and actually began to think he had made some impression upon her heart, not that he now entertained the hope of an immediate triumph over her chastity. The more he contemplated her character, the more difficult the conquest seemed to be: he therefore altered his plan, and resolved to carry on his operations under the shelter of honourable proposals, foreseeing that a wife of her qualifications, if properly managed, would turn greatly to the account of the husband; or, if her virtue should prove refractory, that he could at any time rid himself of the encumbrance, by decamping without beat of drum, after he should be cloyed with possession.

Elevated by these expectations, he one day, in the midst of a preconcerted rhapsody, importing that he could no longer conceal the fire that preyed upon his heart, threw himself on his knees before the lovely mourner, and imprinted a kiss on her fair hand. Though he did not presume to take this liberty till after such preparation as he thought had altogether extinguished her regard for Melvil, and paved the way for his own reception in room of that discarded lover, he had so far overshot his mark, that Monimia,

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instead of favouring his declaration, started up, and retired in silence, her cheeks glowing with shame, and her eyes gleaming with indignation.

Ferdinand no sooner recovered from the confusion produced by this unexpected repulse, than he saw the necessity of coming to a speedy determination, lest the offended fair one should appeal to Renaldo, in which case they might be mutually undeceived, to his utter shame and confusion; he therefore resolved to deprecate her anger by humble supplications, and by protesting, that, whatever tortures he might suffer by suppressing his sentiments, she should never again be offended with a declaration of his passion.

Having thus appeased the gentle Monimia, and discovered that, in spite of her resentment, his friend still kept possession of her heart, he determined to work an effectual separation, so as that the young lady, being utterly deserted by Melvil, should be left altogether in his power. With this Christian intention, he began to sadden his visage with a double shade of pensive melancholy, in the presence of Renaldo, to stifle a succession of involuntary sighs, to answer from the purpose, to be incoherent in his discourse, and, in a word, to act the part of a person wrapt up in sorrowful cogitation.

Count Melvil, soon as he perceived these symptoms, very kindly inquired into the cause of them, and was not a little alarmed to hear the artful and evasive answers of Ferdinand, who, without disclosing the source of his disquiet, earnestly begged leave to retire into some other corner of the world. Roused by this entreaty, the Hungarian's jealousy awoke, and with

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violent agitation, he exclaimed, "Then are my fears too true, my dear Fathom: I comprehend the meaning of your request. I have for some time perceived an host of horrors approaching from that quarter. I know your worth and honour. I depend upon your friendship, and conjure you, by all the ties of it, to free me at once from the most miserable suspense, by owning you have involuntarily captivated the heart of that unhappy maiden."

To this solemn interrogation he made no reply, but shedding a flood of tears, of which he had always a magazine at command, he repeated his desire of withdrawing, and took God to witness, that what he proposed was solely for the quiet of his honoured patron and beloved friend. "Enough," cried the unfortunate Renaldo, "the measure of my woes is now filled up." So saying, he fell backwards in a swoon, from which he was with difficulty recovered to the sensation of the most exquisite torments. During this paroxysm, our adventurer nursed him with infinite care and tenderness, he exhorted him to summon all his fortitude to his assistance, to remember his forefathers, and exert himself in the imitation of their virtues, to fly from those bewitching charms which had enslaved his better part, to retrieve his peace of mind by reflecting on the inconstancy and ingratitude of woman, and amuse his imagination in the pursuit of honour and glory.

After these admonitions he abused his ears with a forged detail of the gradual advances made to him by Monimia, and the steps he had taken to discourage her addresses, and re-establish her virtue, poisoning

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the mind of that credulous youth to such a degree, that, in all probability, he would have put a fatal period to his own existence, had not Fathom found means to allay the rage of his ecstasy, by the cunning arrangement of opposite considerations. He set his pride against his love, he opposed his resentment to his sorrow, and his ambition to his despair. Notwithstanding the balance of power so settled among these antagonists, so violent were the shocks of their successive conflicts, that his bosom fared like a wretched province, harassed, depopulated, and laid waste, by two fierce contending armies. From this moment his life was nothing but an alternation of starts and reveries; he wept and raved by turns, according to the prevailing gust of passion; food became a stranger to his lips, and sleep to his eyelids; he could not support the presence of Monimia, her absence increased the torture of his pangs; and, when he met her by accident, he started back with horror, like a traveller who chances to tread upon a snake.

The poor afflicted orphan, worn to a shadow with self-consuming anguish, eager to find some lowly retreat, where she could breath out her soul in peace, and terrified at the frantic behaviour of Renaldo, communicated to Fathom her desire of removing, and begged that he would take a small picture of her father, decorated with diamonds, and convert them into money, for the expense of her subsistence. This was the last pledge of her family, which she had received from her mother, who had preserved it in the midst of numberless distresses, and no other

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species of misery but that which she groaned under could have prevailed upon the daughter to part with it; but, exclusive of other motives, the very image itself, by recalling to her mind the honours of her name, upbraided her with living in dependence upon a man who had treated her with such indignity and ingratitude; besides, she flattered herself with the hope that she should not long survive the loss of this testimonial.

Our adventurer, with many professions of sorrow and mortification at his own want of capacity to prevent such an alienation, undertook to dispose of it to the best advantage, and to provide her with a cheap and retired apartment, to which he would conduct her in safety, though at the hazard of his life. In the meantime, however, he repaired to his friend Renaldo, and, after having admonished him to arm his soul with patience and philosophy, declared that Monimia's guilty passion for himself could no longer be kept within bounds, that she had conjured him, in the most pressing manner, to assist her in escaping from an house which she considered as the worst of dungeons, because she was in it daily exposed to the sight and company of a man whom she detested, and that she had bribed him to compliance with her request, not only with repeated promises of eternal love and submission, but also with the picture of her father set with diamonds, which she had hitherto reserved as the last and greatest testimony of her affection and esteem.

With these words he presented the fatal pledge to the eyes of the astonished youth, upon whom it

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operated like the poisonous sight of the basilisk, for in an instant, the whole passions of his soul were in the most violent agitation. "What!" cried he, in an ecstasy of rage, "is she so abandoned to perfidy, so lost to shame, so damned to constancy, to gratitude, and virtuous love, as to meditate the means of leaving me without decency, without remorse! to forsake me in my adversity, when my hapless fortune can no longer flatter the pride and vanity of her expectation! O woman! woman! woman! what simile shall I find to illustrate the character of the sex? But I will not have recourse to vain complaints and feeble exclamations. By Heaven! she shall not 'scape, she shall not triumph in her levity, she shall not exult in my distress; no! I will rather sacrifice her to my just resentment, to the injured powers of love and friendship. I will act the avenging minister of Heaven! I will mangle that fair bosom, which contains so false a heart! I will tear her to pieces, and scatter those beauteous limbs as a prey to the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air!"

Fathom, who expected this storm, far from attempting to oppose its progress, waited with patience until its first violence was overblown; then, assuming an air of condolence, animated with that resolution which a friend ought to maintain on such occasions, "My dear Count," said he, "I am not at all surprised at your emotion, because I know what an heart, susceptible as yours, must feel from the apostasy of one who has reigned so long the object of your love, admiration, and esteem. Your endeavours

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to drive her from your thoughts must create an agony much more severe than that which divorces the soul from the body. Nevertheless, I am so confident of your virtue and your manhood, as to foresee, that you will allow the fair Monimia to execute that resolution which she hath so unwisely taken, to withdraw herself from your love and protection. Believe me, my best friend and benefactor, this is a step, in consequence of which you will infallibly retrieve your peace of mind. It may cost you many bitter pangs, it may probe your wounds to the quick; but those pangs will be soothed by the gentle and salutary wing of time, and that probing will rouse you to a due sense of your own dignity and importance, which will enable you to convert your attention to objects far more worthy of your contemplation. All the hopes of happiness you had cherished in the possession of Monimia are now irrecoverably blasted; her heart is now debased beneath your consideration; her love is, without all doubt, extinguished, and her honour irretrievably lost; insomuch, that, were she to profess sorrow for her indiscretion, and implore your forgiveness, with the most solemn promises of regarding you for the future with unalterable fidelity and affection, you ought not to restore her to that place in your heart which she hath so meanly forfeited, because you could not at the same time reinstate her in the possession of that delicate esteem without which there is no harmony, no rapture, no true enjoyment in love.

"No, my dear Renaldo, expel the unworthy tenant from your bosom; allow her to fill up the measure

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of her ingratitude, by deserting her lover, friend, and benefactor. Your glory demands her dismission; the world will applaud your generosity, and your own heart approve of your conduct. So disencumbered, let us exert ourselves once more in promoting your departure from this island, that you may revisit your father's house, do justice to yourself and amiable sister, and take vengeance on the author of your wrongs; then dedicate yourself to glory, in imitation of your renowned ancestors, and flourish in the favour of your imperial patron."

These remonstrances had such an effect upon the Hungarian, that his face was lighted up with a transient gleam of satisfaction. He embraced Ferdinand with great ardour, calling him his pride, his Mentor, his good genius, and entreated him to gratify the inclination of that fickle creature so far as to convey her to another lodging, without loss of time, while he would, by absenting himself, favour their retreat.

Our hero having obtained this permission, went immediately to the skirts of the town, where he had previously bespoke a small, though neat apartment, at the house of an old woman, widow of a French refugee. He had already reconnoitred the ground, by sounding his landlady, from whose poverty and complaisance he found reason to expect all sorts of freedom and opportunity for the accomplishment of his aim upon Monimia's person. The room being prepared for her reception, he returned to that disconsolate beauty, to whom he presented ten guineas, which he pretended to have raised by pledging

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the picture, though he himself acted as the pawnbroker on this occasion, for a very plain and obvious reason.

The fair orphan was overjoyed to find her wish so speedily accomplished. She forthwith packed up her necessaries in a trunk; and a hackney-coach was called in the dusk of the evening, in which she embarked with her baggage and conductor.

Yet she did not leave the habitation of Renaldo without regret. In the instant of parting, the idea of that unfortunate youth was associated with every well-known object that presented itself to her eyes; not as an inconstant, ungenerous, and perjured swain, but as the accomplished, the virtuous, the melting lover, who had captivated her virgin heart. As Fathom led her to the door, she was met by Renaldo's dog, which had long been her favourite; and the poor animal fawning upon her as she passed, her heart was overwhelmed with such a gush of tenderness, that a flood of tears streamed down her cheeks, and she had well-nigh sunk upon the floor.

Ferdinand, considering this emotion as the last tribute she would pay to Renaldo, hurried her into the coach, where she soon recovered her composure; and in a little time he ushered her into the house of Madam la Mer, by whom she was received with great cordiality, and conducted to her apartment, with which she found no other fault than that of its being too good for one in her forlorn situation. Here, while the tear of gratitude started in either eye, she thanked our adventurer for his benevolence

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and kind concern, assuring him, that she would not fail duly to beseech the Most High to shower down blessings upon him, as the orphan's friend and protector.

Fathom was not deficient in those expressions that were best adapted to her present turn of mind. He observed, that what he had done was in obedience to the dictates of common humanity, which would have prompted him to assist any fellow-creature in distress; but that her peculiar virtue and qualifications were such as challenged the utmost exertion of his faculties in her service. He said, that surely Heaven had not created such perfection in vain; that she was destined to receive as well as to communicate happiness; and that the Providence, which she so piously adored, would not fail, in due season, to raise her from distress and affliction, to that honour and felicity for which she was certainly ordained. In the meantime, he entreated her to depend upon his service and fidelity, and the article of her board being settled, he left her to the company and consolation of her discreet hostess, who soon insinuated herself into the good opinion of her beauteous lodger.

While our hero was employed in this transaction, Renaldo sallied forth in a sort of intoxication, which Fathom's admonitions had inspired; and, repairing to a certain noted coffee-house, engaged at chess with an old French refugee, that his attention, by being otherwise employed, might not stray towards that fatal object which he ardently wished to forget. But, unluckily for him, he had scarce performed

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three moves of the game, when his ears were exposed to a dialogue between two young gentlemen, one of whom asked the other if he would go and see the "Orphan" acted at one of the theatres; observing, as a farther inducement, that the part of Monimia would be performed by a young gentlewoman who had never appeared on the stage. At mention of that name, Renaldo started; for though it did not properly belong to his orphan, it was the appellation by which she had been distinguished ever since her separation from her father's house, and therefore it recalled her to his imagination in the most interesting point of view. Though he endeavoured to expel the image, by a closer application to his play, every now and then it intruded upon his fancy, and at each return made a stronger impression; so that he found himself in the situation of an unfortunate bark stranded upon some hidden rock, which, when the wind begins to blow, feels every succeeding wave more boisterous than the former, until, with irresistible fury, they surmount her deck, sweep everything before them, and dash her all to pieces.

The refugee had observed his first emotion, which he attributed to an unforeseen advantage he himself had gained over the Hungarian; but seeing him, in the sequel, bite his lip, roll his eyes, groan, writhe his body, ejaculate incoherent curses, and neglect his game, the Huguenot concluded that he was mad, and being seized with terror and dismay, got up and scampered off, without ceremony or hesitation.

Melvil, thus left to the horrors of his own thought, which tortured him with the apprehension of losing

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Monimia for ever, could no longer combat that suggestion, but ran homewards with all the speed he could exert, in order to prevent her retreat. When he crossed the threshold, he was struck with such a damp of presaging fear, that he durst not in person approach her apartment, nor even, by questioning the servant, inform himself of the particulars he wanted to know. Yet his suspense becoming more insupportable than his fear, he rushed from room to room in quest of that which was not to be found; and, seeing Monimia's chamber door open, entered the deserted temple in a state of distraction, calling aloud upon her name. All was silent, solitary, and woful. "She is gone," he cried, shedding a flood of tears, "she is for ever lost; and all my hopes of happiness are fled!"

So saying, he sunk upon that couch on which Monimia had oft reposed, and abandoned himself to all the excess of grief and despondence. In this deplorable condition he was found by our adventurer, who gently chid him for his want of resolution, and again repelled his sorrow, by arousing his resentment against the innocent cause of his disquiet, having beforehand forged the particulars of provocation.

"Is it possible," said he, "that Renaldo can still retain the least sentiment of regard for a fickle woman, by whom he has been so ungratefully forsaken and so unjustly scorned? Is it possible he can be so disturbed by the loss of a creature who is herself lost to all virtue and decorum?—Time and reflection, my worthy friend, will cure you of that inglorious malady. And the future misconduct of

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that imprudent damsel will, doubtless, contribute to the recovery of your peace. Her behaviour, at leaving the house where she had received so many marks of the most delicate affection, was in all respects so opposite to honour and decency, that I could scarce refrain from telling her I was shocked at her deportment, even while she loaded me with protestations of love. When a woman's heart is once depraved, she bids adieu to all restraint; — she preserves no measures. It was not simply contempt which she expressed for Renaldo; she seems to resent his being able to live under her disdain; and that resentment stoops to objects unworthy of indignation. Even your dog was not exempted from the effects of her displeasure. For, in her passage to the door, she kicked the poor animal as one of your dependents; and, in our way to the apartment I had provided for her, she entertained me with a ludicrous comment upon the manner in which you first made her acquainted with your passion. All that modesty of carriage, all that chastity of conversation, all that dignity of grief, which she knew so well how to affect, is now entirely laid aside, and, when I quitted her, she seemed the most gay, giddy, and impertinent of her sex."

"Gracious powers!" exclaimed Renaldo, starting from the couch, "am I under the delusion of a dream; or are these things really so, as my friend has represented them? Such a total and sudden degeneracy is amazing! is monstrous and unnatural!"

"Such, my dear Count," replied our hero, "is the caprice of a female heart, fickle as the wind, uncertain

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as a calm at sea, fixed to no principle, but swayed by every fantastic gust of passion, or of whim. Congratulate yourself, therefore, my friend, upon your happy deliverance from such a domestic plague — upon the voluntary exile of a traitor from your bosom. — Recollect the dictates of your duty, your discretion, and your glory, and think upon the honours and elevated enjoyment for which you are certainly ordained. To-night let us over a cheerful bottle anticipate your success; and to-morrow I will accompany you to the house of an usurer, who, I am informed, fears no risk, provided twenty per cent. be given, and the borrower's life insured."

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CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

THE ART OF BORROWING FURTHER EXPLAINED, AND AN ACCOUNT OF A STRANGE PHENOMENON.

IN this manner did the artful incendiary work upon the passions of the credulous unsuspecting Hungarian, who pressed him to his breast with the most cordial expressions of friendship, calling him his guardian, his saviour, his second father, and gave himself up wholly to his advice.

Next morning, according to the plan they had laid overnight, they repaired to a tavern in the neighbourhood of the person to whom our adventurer had been directed, and were fortunate enough to find him in the house, transacting a money affair with a young gentleman who treated him with his morning's whet.

That affair being negotiated, he adjourned into another room with Renaldo and his companion, who were not a little surprised to see this minister of Plutus in the shape of a young sprightly beau, trimmed up in all the foppery of the fashion; for they had hitherto always associated with the idea of an usurer old age and rusty apparel. After divers modish congees, he begged to know to what he should attribute the honour of their message; when Ferdinand, who acted the orator, told him, that his

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friend Count Melvil, having occasion for a sum of money, had been directed to a gentleman of his name, "and, I suppose," added he, "you are the son of the person with whom the affair is to be negotiated."

"Sir," said this *petit-maître*, with a smile, "I perceive you are surprised to see one of my profession in the appearance of a gentleman; and perhaps your wonder will not cease, when I tell you, that my education was liberal, and that I once had the honour to bear a commission in the British army. I was indeed a first lieutenant of marines, and will venture to say, that no officer in the service was more delicate than myself in observing all the punctilios of honour. I entertained the utmost contempt for all the trading part of the nation, and suffered myself to be run through the body in a duel, rather than roll with a brother-lieutenant, who was a broker's son. But, thank Heaven! I have long ago conquered all those ridiculous prejudices. I soon observed, that without money there was no respect, honour, or convenience to be acquired in life; that wealth amply supplied the want of wit, merit, and pedigree, having influence and pleasure ever at command; and that the world never failed to worship the flood of affluence, without examining the dirty channels through which it commonly flowed.

"At the end of the war, finding my appointments reduced to two shillings and fourpence per day, and being addicted to pleasures which I could not possibly purchase from such a fund, I sold my half-pay for two hundred pounds, which I lent upon bond to a young officer of the same regiment, on condition

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that he should insure his life, and restore one-fourth part of the sum by way of premium. I happened to be lucky in this first essay; for the borrower, having in six weeks expended the money, made an excursion on the highway, was apprehended, tried, convicted of felony, and cut his own throat, to prevent the shame of a public execution; so that his bond was discharged by the insurers.

"In short, gentlemen, when I engaged in this business, I determined to carry it on with such spirit, as would either make my fortune, or entirely ruin me in a little time; and hitherto my endeavours have been tolerably successful. Nor do I think my proceedings a whit more criminal or unjust than those of other merchants, who strive to turn their money to the best account. The commodity I deal in is cash; and it is my business to sell it to the best advantage. A London factor sends a cargo of goods to market, and if he gets two hundred per cent. upon the sale, he is commended for industry and address. If I sell money for one-fourth part of that profit, certain persons will be so unjust as to cry, Shame upon me, for taking such advantage of my neighbour's distress; not considering, that the trader took four times the same advantage of those people who bought his cargo, though his risk was not half so great as mine, and although the money I sold perhaps retrieved the borrower from the very jaws of destruction. For example, it was but yesterday I saved a worthy man from being arrested for a sum of money, for which he had bailed a friend who treacherously left him in the lurch. As he did not

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foresee what would happen, he had made no provision for the demand, and his sphere of life secluding him from all sorts of monied intercourse, he could not raise the cash by his credit in the usual way of borrowing; so that, without my assistance, he must have gone to jail; a disgrace which would have proved fatal to the peace of his family, and utterly ruined his reputation. — Nay, that very young gentleman, from whom I am just now parted, will, in all probability, be indebted to me for a very genteel livelihood. He had obtained the absolute promise of being provided for by a great man, who sits at the helm of affairs in a neighbouring kingdom; but, being destitute of all other resources, he could not have equipped himself for the voyage, in order to profit by his lordship's intention, unless I had enabled him to pursue his good fortune."

Renaldo was not a little pleased to hear this harangue, to which Fathom replied with many florid encomiums upon the usurer's good sense and humane disposition; then he explained the errand of his friend, which was to borrow three hundred pounds, in order to retrieve his inheritance, of which he had been defrauded in his absence.

"Sir," said the lender, addressing himself to Count Melvil, "I pretend to have acquired by experience some skill in physiognomy; and though there are some faces so deeply disguised as to baffle all the penetration of our art, there are others, in which the heart appears with such nakedness of integrity, as at once to recommend it to our goodwill. I own your countenance prepossesses me in your favour; and

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you shall be accommodated, upon those terms from which I never deviate, provided you can find proper security, that you shall not quit the British dominions; for that, with me, is a condition *sine qua non*."

This was a very disagreeable declaration to Renaldo, who candidly owned, that, as his concerns lay upon the Continent, his purpose was to leave England without delay. The usurer professed himself sorry that it was not in his power to oblige him; and, in order to prevent any further importunity, assured them, he had laid it down as a maxim, from which he would never swerve, to avoid all dealings with people whom, if need should be, he could not sue by the laws of this realm.

Thus the intervention of one unlucky and unforeseen circumstance blasted in an instant the budding hopes of Melvil, who, while his visage exhibited the most sorrowful disappointment, begged to know, if there was any person of his acquaintance who might be less scrupulous in that particular.

The young gentleman directed them to another member of his profession, and wishing them success, took his leave with great form and complaisance. This instance of politeness was, however, no more than a shift to disengage himself the more easily from their entreaties; for, when the case was opened to the second usurer, he blessed himself from such customers, and dismissed them with the most mortifying and boorish refusal. Notwithstanding these repulses, Renaldo resolved to make one desperate push; and, without allowing himself the least respite, solicited, one by one, not fewer than fifteen persons who dealt

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in this kind of traffic, and his proposals were rejected by each. At last, fatigued by the toil, and exasperated at the ill success of his expedition, and half mad with the recollection of his finances, which were now drained to half-a-crown, "Since we have nothing to expect," cried he, "from the favour of Christians, let us have recourse to the descendants of Judah. Though they lie under the general reproach of nations, as a people dead to virtue and benevolence, and wholly devoted to avarice, fraud, and extortion, the most savage of their tribe cannot treat me with more barbarity of indifference, than I have experienced among those who are the authors of their reproach."

Although Fathom looked upon this proposal as an extravagant symptom of despair, he affected to approve of the scheme, and encouraged Renaldo with the hope of succeeding in another quarter, even if this expedition should fail; for, by this time, our adventurer was half resolved to export him at his own charge, rather than he should be much longer restricted in his designs upon Monimia.

Meanwhile, being resolved to try the experiment upon the children of Israel, they betook themselves to the house of a rich Jew, whose wealth they considered as a proof of his rapaciousness; and, being admitted into his counting-house, they found him in the midst of half a dozen clerks, when Renaldo, in his imagination, likened him unto a minister of darkness surrounded by his familiars, and planning schemes of misery to be executed upon the hapless sons of men. In spite of these suggestions, which were not at all

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mitigated by the forbidding aspect of the Hebrew, he demanded a private audience; and, being ushered into another apartment, he explained his business with manifest marks of disorder and affliction. Indeed, his confusion was in some measure owing to the looks of the Jew, who, in the midst of this exordium, pulled down his eyebrows, which were surprisingly black and bushy, so as, in appearance, totally to extinguish his visage, though he was all the time observing our youth from behind those almost impenetrable thickets.

Melvil, having signified his request, "Young gentleman," said the Israelite, with a most discordant voice, "what in the name of goodness could induce you to come to me upon such an errand? Did you ever hear that I lent money to strangers without security?" "No," replied Renaldo, "nor did I believe I should profit by my application; but my affairs are desperate; and my proposals having been rejected by every Christian to whom they were offered, I was resolved to try my fate among the Jews, who are reckoned another species of men."

Fathom, alarmed at this abrupt reply, which he supposed could not fail to disgust the merchant, interposed in the conversation, by making an apology for the plain dealing of his friend, who, he said, was soured and ruffled by his misfortunes; then exerting that power of eloquence which he had at command, he expostulated upon Renaldo's claim and expectations, described the wrongs he had suffered, extolled his virtue, and drew a most pathetic picture of his distress.

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The Jew listened attentively for some time; then his eyebrows began to rise and fall alternately; he coughed, sneezed, and winking hard, "I 'm plagued," said he, "with a salt rheum that trickles from my eyes without intermission." So saying, he wiped the moisture from his face, and proceeded in these words: "Sir, your story is plausible; and your friend is a good advocate; but before I give an answer to your demand, I must beg leave to ask if you can produce undeniable evidence of your being the identical person you really assume? If you are really the Count de Melvil, you will excuse my caution. We cannot be too much on our guard against fraud; though I must own you have not the air of an impostor."

Renaldo's eyes began to sparkle at this preliminary question; to which he replied, that he could procure the testimony of the Emperor's minister, to whom he had occasionally paid his respects since his first arrival in England.

"If that be the case," said the Jew, "take the trouble to call here to-morrow morning, at eight o'clock, and I will carry you in my own coach to the house of his excellency, with whom I have the honour to be acquainted; and, if he has nothing to object against your character or pretensions, I will contribute my assistance towards your obtaining justice at the Imperial court."

The Hungarian was so much confounded at this unexpected reception, that he had not power to thank the merchant for his promised favour, but stood motionless and silent, while the streams of

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gratitude ran down his cheeks. This genuine emotion of the heart was of more weight with the Jew, than the eloquent acknowledgment which Ferdinand took the opportunity of making for his friend; and he was fain to dismiss them a little abruptly, in order to prevent a second discharge of that same rheum of which he had already complained.

Melvil recollected all that had happened as a dream, which had no foundation in truth, and was all day long in a sort of delirium, produced by the alternate gusts of hope and fear that still agitated his bosom; for he was not yet without apprehension of being again disappointed by some unlucky occurrence.

He did not, however, fail to be punctual to the hour of his appointment, when the Jew told him, there would be no occasion for visiting the ambassador, because Renaldo had been, the preceding day, recognised by one of the clerks who had been employed as a purveyor in the Imperial army; and who, knowing his family, confirmed everything he had alleged. "After breakfast," continued this benevolent Israelite, "I will give you an order upon my banker for five hundred pounds, that you may be enabled to appear at Vienna as the son and representative of Count Melvil; and you shall also be furnished with a letter of recommendation to a person of some influence at that court, whose friendship and countenance may be of some service to your suit; for I am now heartily engaged in your interest, in consequence of the fair and unblemished character which I find you have hitherto maintained."

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The reader must appeal to his own heart, to acquire a just idea of Renaldo's feelings, when every tittle of these promises was fulfilled, and the merchant refused to take one farthing by way of premium, contenting himself with the slender security of a personal bond. He was, in truth, overwhelmed with the obligation, and certainly disposed to believe that his benefactor was something more than human. As for Fathom, his sentiments took a different turn; and he scrupled not to impute all this kindness to some deep-laid interested scheme, the scope of which he could not at present comprehend.

After the tumults of the young gentleman's joy had subsided, and he found himself eased of that burdensome poverty under which he had groaned so long, his thoughts, which before were dissipated upon the various circumstances of distress, began to collect themselves in a body, and to resume their deliberations upon a subject which they had been long accustomed to consider; this was no other than the forlorn Monimia, whose idea now emerged in his bosom, being disencumbered of one part of the load by which it had been depressed. He mentioned her name to Fathom with marks of the most melting compassion, deplored her apostasy, and, while he protested that he had divorced her for ever from his heart, expressed an inclination to see her once more before his departure, that he might in person exhort her to penitence and reformation.

Our adventurer, who dreaded such an interview as the infallible means of his own ruin, resisted the pro-

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posal with the whole power of his elocution. He affirmed, that Renaldo's desire was a manifest proof that he still retained part of the fatal poison which that enchantress had spread within his veins; and that the sight of her, softened by his reproaches into tears and affected contrition, would dispel his resentment, disable his manhood, and blow the embers of his former passion to such a rage, as would hurry him on to a reconciliation, which would debase his honour, and ruin his future peace. In a word, Ferdinand described the danger that would attend the meeting in such emphatic terms, that the Hungarian started with horror at the picture which he drew, and in this particular conformed with the admonition of his friend.

One hundred pounds of the Jew's money was immediately appropriated for the payment of his most urgent debts; the like sum he presented to his friend Fathom, with a solemn promise of sharing with him whatever good fortune might await him in Germany. And though Monimia had forfeited all title to his regard, so ill could he bear the prospect of her distress, that he entrusted his dear companion with the half of what remained, to be expended for her use, fully resolving to screen her from the shocks and temptations of want, as the circumstances of his future fate would allow.

Fathom, far from opposing, applauded his generosity with marks of extreme wonder and admiration, assuring him, that she should be put in possession of his bounty immediately after his departure, he being unwilling to make her acquainted with her good

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fortune before that period, lest, finding his affairs in a fair way of being retrieved, she should be base enough to worship his returning prosperity, and, by false professions, and artful blandishments, seek to ensnare his heart anew.

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CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

COUNT FATHOM UNMASKS HIS BATTERY; IS REPULSED; AND VARIES HIS OPERATIONS WITHOUT EFFECT.

EVERY necessary preparation being made, Renaldo, accompanied by our adventurer, took the road to Dover, where he embarked in a packet-boat for Calais, after having settled a correspondence with his dear Ferdinand, from whom he did not part without tears. He had before solicited him to be his fellow-traveller, that he might personally enjoy the benefit of his conversation and superior sagacity; but these entreaties he strenuously opposed, on pretence of his being determined to push his fortune in England, which he considered as his native country, and as the land in which, of all others, a man of merit has the best encouragement. Such were the reasons he alleged for refusing to attend his benefactor, who was himself eagerly desirous of attaining a settlement in the island of Great Britain. But our hero's real motives for staying were of a very different complexion. — The reader is already informed of his aim upon the fair orphan, which, at present, was the chief spring of his conduct. He may also recollect such passages of his life, as were sufficient to deter him from reappearing at Presburg or Vienna. But, besides these

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reflections, he was detained by a full persuasion that Renaldo would sink under the power and influence of his antagonist, consequently be rendered incapable to provide for his friends; and that he himself, fraught with wiles and experience as he was, could not fail to make himself amends for what he had suffered among a people equally rich and unthinking.

Melvil, having embraced our adventurer, and with a deep sigh bid him take care of the unfortunate Monimia, committed himself to the sea, and, by the assistance of a favourable gale, was in four hours safely landed on the French shore; while Fathom took post-horses for London, where he arrived that same night, and next day, in the forenoon, went to visit the beauteous mourner, who had as yet received no intimation of Renaldo's departure or design. He found her in the attitude of writing a letter to her inconstant lover, the contents of which the reader will be acquainted with in due time. Her countenance, notwithstanding the veil of melancholy by which it was overcast, seemed altogether serene and composed; she was the picture of pious resignation, *and sat like* PATIENCE *on a monument, smiling at grief*. After having paid the compliment of the morning. Fathom begged pardon for having omitted to visit her during three days, in which, he said, his time had been wholly engrossed in procuring a proper equipage for Count Melvil, who had at last bid an eternal adieu to the island of Great Britain.

At this information the hapless Monimia fell back in her chair, and continued some minutes in a swoon; from which being recovered, "Excuse me, Mr.

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Fathom," cried she with a deep sigh; "this, I hope, is the last agony I shall feel from my unhappy passion." — Then wiping the tears from her lovely eyes, she retrieved her tranquillity, and desired to know by what means Renaldo had been enabled to undertake his journey into the empire. Our hero, upon this occasion, assumed the whole merit of having promoted the interest of his friend, by giving her to understand, that he, in consequence of an unforeseen windfall, had defrayed the expense of the Count's equipment; though he observed, that it was not without reluctance he saw Renaldo make a wrong use of his friendship.

"Although I was happy," proceeded this artful traitor, "in being able to discharge my obligations to the house of Melvil, I could not help feeling the most sensible chagrin, when I saw my assistance rendered subservient to the triumphs of the youth's baseness and infidelity; for he chose, as the companion of his travels, the abandoned woman for whom he had foresaken the all-perfect Monimia, whose virtue and accomplishments did not preserve her sacred from his ungrateful sarcasms and unmannerly ridicule. Believe me, madam, I was so shocked at his conversation on that subject, and so much incensed at his want of delicacy, that my temper was scarce sufficient for the ceremony of parting. And, now that my debt to his family is over-paid, I have solemnly renounced his correspondence."

When she heard that, instead of betraying the least symptom of regret or compassion for her unhappy fate, the perfidious youth had exulted over her fall,

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and even made her a subject for his mirth, the blood revisited her faded cheeks, and resentment restored to her eyes that poignancy which sorrow had before overcome. Yet she scorned to give speech to her indignation; but, forcing a smile, "Why should I repine," said she, "at the mortifications of a life which I despise, and from which, I hope, Heaven speedily will set me free!"

Fathom, fired by her emotion, which had recalled all the graces of her beauty, exclaimed in a rapture, "Talk not so contemptuously of this life, which hath still a fund of happiness in store for the amiable, the divine Monimia. Though one admirer hath proved an apostate to his vows, your candour will not suffer you to condemn the whole sex. Some there are, whose bosoms glow with passion equally pure, unalterable, and intense. For my own part, I have sacrificed to a rigid punctilio of honour the dearest ideas of my heart. I beheld your unrivalled charms, and deeply felt their power. Yet, while a possibility of Melvil's reformation remained, and while I was restrained by my niggard fortune from making a tender worthy of your acceptance, I combated with my inclinations, and bore without repining the pangs of hopeless love. But, now that my honour is disengaged, and my fortune rendered independent, by the last will of a worthy nobleman, whose friendship I was favoured with in France, I presume to lay myself at the feet of the adorable Monimia, as the most faithful of admirers, whose happiness or misery wholly depends upon her nod. Believe me, madam, these are not the professions of idle gallantry — I

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speak the genuine, though imperfect, language of my heart. Words, even the most pathetic, cannot do justice to my love. I gaze upon your beauty with ravishment; but I contemplate the graces of your soul with such awful veneration, that I tremble while I approach you, as if my vows were addressed to some superior being."

During this declaration, which was pronounced in the most emphatic manner, Monimia was successively agitated with shame, anger, and grief; nevertheless, she summoned her whole philosophy to her aid, and, with a tranquil, though determined air, begged he would not diminish the obligations he had already conferred, by disturbing with such unseasonable addresses a poor unhappy maid, who had detached all her thoughts from earthly objects, and waited impatiently for that dissolution which alone could put a period to her misfortunes.

Fathom, imagining that these were no other than the suggestions of a temporary disappointment and despondence, which it was his business to oppose with all his eloquence and art, renewed his theme with redoubled ardour, and, at last, became so importunate in his desires, that Monimia, provoked beyond the power of concealing her resentment, said, she was heartily sorry to find herself under the necessity of telling him, that, in the midst of her misfortunes, she could not help remembering what she had been. Then, rising from her seat, with all the dignity of displeasure, "Perhaps," added she, "you have forgot who was the father of the once happy Monimia."

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With these words she retired into another chamber, leaving our adventurer confounded by the repulse he had sustained. Not that he was discouraged from prosecuting his aim — on the contrary, this rebuff seemed to add fresh vigour to his operations. He now thought it high time to bring over Madam la Mer to his interest; and, to facilitate her conversion, took an opportunity of bribing her with some inconsiderable presents, after having amused her with a plausible tale of his passion for Monimia, with whom she undertook the office of his mediatrix, on the supposition that his intentions were honourable, and highly advantageous to her lodger.

She was, first of all, invested with the office of obtaining pardon for the offence he had given; and, in this negotiation she succeeded so well, as to become an advocate for his suit; accordingly, she took all occasions of magnifying his praise. His agreeable person was often the subject of her discourse to the fair mourner. Her admiration dwelt upon his politeness, good sense, and winning deportment; and she every day retailed little stories of his benevolence and greatness of soul. The defect in his birth she represented as a circumstance altogether foreign from the consideration of his merit; especially in a nation where such distinctions are as little respected as they will be in a future state. She mentioned several persons of note, who basked in the sunshine of power and fortune, without having enjoyed the least hereditary assistance from their forefathers. One, she said, sprung from the loins of an obscure

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attorney; another was the grandson of a valet-de-chambre; a third was the issue of an accountant; and a fourth the offspring of a woollendraper. All these were the children of their own good works, and had raised themselves upon their personal virtues and address; a foundation certainly more solid and honourable than a vague inheritance derived from ancestors, in whose deserts they could not be supposed to have borne the least share.

Monimia listened to all these arguments with great patience and affability, though she at once dived into the source from which all such insinuations flowed. She joined in the commendations of Fathom, and owned herself a particular instance of that benevolence which the old lady had so justly extolled; but, once for all, to prevent the supplication which Madam la Mer was about to make, she solemnly protested that her heart was altogether shut against any other earthly engagement, and that her thoughts were altogether employed upon her eternal salvation.

The assiduous landlady, perceiving the steadiness of her disposition, thought proper to alter her method of proceeding, and, for the present, suspended that theme by which she found her fair lodger disobliged. Resolved to reconcile Monimia to life, before she would again recommend Ferdinand to her love, she endeavoured to amuse her imagination, by recounting the occasional incidents of the day, hoping gradually to decoy her attention to those sublunary objects from which it had been industriously weaned. She seasoned her conversation with agreeable sallies; enlarged upon the different scenes of pleasure and

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diversion appertaining to this great metropolis; practised upon her palate with the delicacies of eating; endeavoured to shake her temperance with repeated proffers and recommendations of certain cordials and restoratives, which she alleged were necessary for the recovery of her health; and pressed her to make little excursions into the fields that skirt the town, for the benefit of air and exercise.

While this auxiliary plied the disconsolate Monimia on one hand, Fathom was not remiss on the other. He now seemed to have sacrificed his passion to her quiet; his discourse turned upon more indifferent subjects. He endeavoured to dispel her melancholy with arguments drawn from philosophy and religion. On some occasions, he displayed all his fund of good humour, with a view to beguile her sorrow; he importuned her to give him the pleasure of squiring her to some place of innocent entertainment; and, finally, insisted upon her accepting a pecuniary reinforcement to her finances, which he knew to be in a most consumptive condition.

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CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

MONIMIA'S HONOUR IS PROTECTED BY THE INTERPOSITION OF HEAVEN.

WITH that complacency and fortitude which were peculiar to herself, this hapless stranger resisted all those artful temptations. Her sustenance was barely such as exempted her from the guilt of being accessory to her own death; her drink was the simple element. She encouraged no discourse but that which turned upon the concerns of her immortal part. She never went abroad, except in visits to a French chapel in the neighbourhood; she refused the proffered assistance of our adventurer with equal obstinacy and politeness, and with pleasure saw herself wasting towards that period of mortality which was the consummation of her wish. Yet her charms, far from melting away with her constitution, seemed to triumph over the decays of nature. Her shape and features still retained that harmony for which they had always been distinguished. A mixture of majesty and sweetness diffused itself in her looks, and her feebleness added to that soft and feminine grace which attracts the sympathy, and engages the protection of every humane beholder. The associates thus baffled in their attempts to excite her ideas of

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pleasure, again shifted their plan, and resolved to attack this forlorn beauty on the side of fear and mortification.

Our adventurer became less frequent in his visits, and more indifferent in his language and deportment; while Madam la Mer gradually relaxed in that complacency and respect with which she had hitherto behaved towards her fair lodger. She even began to drop hints of disapprobation and reproach against this pattern of innocence and beauty, and at length grew bold enough to tell her, that her misfortunes could be attributed to nothing but her own obstinacy and pride; that she had been at great pains to disoblige the only person who was able and willing to raise her above dependence; and that, if his protection should be withdrawn, she must be exposed to the utmost extremity of distress.

These insinuations, instead of producing the desired effect, inflamed the indignation of Monimia, who, in a most dignified style of rebuke, chid her for her indelicacy and presumption, observing, that she could have no title to take such freedoms with lodgers, whose punctuality and regular deportment left her no room to complain. Notwithstanding this animated reply, she underwent the most deplorable anguish, when she reflected upon the insolence of this woman, from whose barbarity she had no resource; and, seeing no other possibility of redress than that of appealing to the good offices of Fathom, she conquered her reluctance so far, as to complain to him of Madam la Mer's incivility.

Pleased with this application, he gave her to

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understand, with very little ceremony or preamble, that it wholly depended upon herself whether she should continue to be wretched, or be delivered at once from all her cares and perplexity; that, notwithstanding the disdain with which she had treated his addresses, he was still ready to lay himself and his fortune at her feet; and that, if she should again reject the disinterested proposal, the whole world and her own conscience would charge upon herself whatever calamities she might be subjected to in the sequel. Interpreting into a favourable hesitation her silence, which was the result of wrath and amazement, he proceeded to throw himself at her feet, and utter a romantic rhapsody, in the course of which, laying aside all that restraint which he had hitherto preserved, he seized her delicate hand, and pressed it to his lips; nay, so far did he forget himself on this occasion, that he caught the fair creature in his arms, and rudely ravished a kiss from those lips which he had before contemplated with the most distant reverence of desire.

Having thus broken down the fences of decorum, and being heated with transport, he, in all probability, would have acted the part of young Tarquin, and violated by force that sacred shrine of honour, beauty, and unblemished truth, had not the wrath kindled by such an unexpected outrage inspired her with strength and spirits sufficient to protect her virtue, and intimidate the ruffian who could offer violence to such perfection. She broke from his detested embrace with surprising agility, and called aloud to her landlady for assistance; but that dis-

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creet matron was resolved to hear nothing, and Fathom's appetite being whetted to a most brutal degree of eagerness, "Madam," said he, "all opposition is vain. What you have refused to my entreaties, you shall yield to my power; and I am determined to force you to your own advantage."

So saying, he sprung towards her, with the most savage and impious intent, when this amiable heroine snatching up his sword, which lay upon a by-table, and unsheathing it instantaneously, presented the point to his breast, and, while her eyes glanced with intolerable keenness, "Villain!" cried she, "the spirit of my father animates my bosom, and the vengeance of Heaven shall not be frustrated." He was not so much affected by his bodily danger, as awestruck at the manner of her address, and the appearance of her aspect, which seemed to shine with something supernatural, and actually disordered his whole faculties, insomuch that he retreated without attempting to make the least reply; and she, having secured the door after his departure, sat down to ponder upon this shocking event.

Words are wanting to describe the accumulated horrors that took possession of her mind, when she thus beheld all her presaging fears realised, and found herself at the mercy of two wretches, who had now pulled off the mask, after having lost all sentiments of humanity. Common affliction was an agreeable reverie to what she suffered, deprived of her parents, exiled from her friends and country, reduced to the brink of wanting the most indispensable necessaries of life, in a foreign land, where she

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knew not one person to whose protection she could have recourse, from the inexpressible woes that environed her. She complained to Heaven that her life was protracted, for the augmentation of that misery which was already too severe to be endured; for she shuddered at the prospect of being utterly abandoned in the last stage of mortality, without one friend to close her eyes, or do the last offices of humanity to her breathless corse. These were dreadful reflections to a young lady who had been born to affluence and splendour, trained up in all the elegance of education, by nature fraught with that sensibility which refines the sentiment and taste, and so tenderly cherished by her indulgent parents, that *they suffered not the winds of Heaven to visit her face too roughly.*

Having passed the night in such agony, she rose at daybreak, and, hearing the chapel bell toll for morning prayers, resolved to go to this place of worship, in order to implore the assistance of Heaven. She no sooner opened her chamber door, with this intent, than she was met by Madam la Mer, who, after having professed her concern for what had happened overnight, and imputed Mr. Fathom's rudeness to the spirit of intoxication, by which she had never before seen him possessed, she endeavoured to dissuade Monimia from her purpose, by observing, that her health would be prejudiced by the cold morning air; but finding her determined, she insisted upon accompanying her to chapel, on pretence of respect, though, in reality, with a view to prevent the escape of her beauteous lodger. Thus attended,

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the hapless mourner entered the place, and, according to the laudable hospitality of England, which is the only country in Christendom where a stranger is not made welcome to the house of God, this amiable creature, emaciated and enfeebled as she was, must have stood in a common passage during the whole service, had not she been perceived by a humane gentlewoman, who, struck with her beauty and dignified air, and melted with sympathy at the ineffable sorrow which was visible in her countenance, opened the pew in which she sat, and accommodated Monimia and her attendant. If she was captivated by her first appearance, she was not less affected by the deportment of her fair guest, which was the pattern of genuine devotion.

In a word, this good lady, who was a merchant's widow in opulent circumstances, was inflamed with a longing desire to know and befriend the amiable stranger, who, after service, turning about to thank her for her civility, Madam Clement, with that frankness which is the result of true benevolence, told her, she was too much prepossessed in her favour to let slip this opportunity of craving her acquaintance, and of expressing her inclination to alleviate, if possible, that affliction which was manifest in her looks.

Monimia, overwhelmed with gratitude and surprise at this unexpected address, gazed upon the lady in silence, and when she repeated her tenders of service, could make no other reply to her goodness, than by bursting into a flood of tears. This was a species of eloquence which did not pass unregarded by Madam

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Clement, who, while her own eyes were bedewed with the drops of sympathy and compassion, took the lovely orphan by the hand, and led her, without further ceremony, to her own coach, that stood waiting at the door, whither they were followed by Mrs. la Mer, who was so much confounded at the adventure, that she made no objections to the proposal of the lady, who handed her lodger into the carriage; but retired, with all possible despatch, to make Fathom acquainted with this unforeseen event.

Meanwhile the agitation of Monimia, at this providential deliverance, was such as had well-nigh destroyed her tender frame. The blood flushed and forsook her cheeks by turns; she trembled from head to foot, notwithstanding the consolatory assurances of Madam Clement, and, without being able to utter one word, was conducted to the house of that kind benefactress, where the violence of her transports overpowered her constitution, and she sunk down upon a couch in a swoon, from which she was not easily recovered. This affecting circumstance augmented the pity, and interested the curiosity of Madam Clement, who concluded there was something very extraordinary in the case of the stranger, to produce these agonies; and grew impatient to hear the particulars of her story.

Monimia no sooner retrieved the use of her faculties, than looking around, and observing with what humane concern her new hostess was employed in effecting her recovery, "Is this," said she, "a flattering illusion of the brain? or am I really under the protection of some beneficent being, whom Heaven

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hath inspired with generosity to rescue an hapless stranger from the most forlorn state of misery and woe?" Her voice was at all times ravishingly sweet; and this exclamation was pronounced with such pathetic fervour, that Madam Clement clasped her in her arms, and kissing her with all the eagerness of maternal affection, "Yes," cried she, "fair creature, Heaven hath bestowed upon me an heart to compassionate, and power, I hope, to lighten the burden of your sorrows."

She then prevailed upon her to take some nourishment, and afterwards to recount the particulars of her fate; a task she performed with such accuracy and candour, that Madam Clement, far from suspecting her sincerity, saw truth and conviction in every circumstance of her tale; and, having condoled her misfortunes, entreated her to forget them, or at least look upon herself as one sheltered under the care and tuition of a person whose study it would be to supply her want of natural parents. This would have been an happy vicissitude of fortune, had it not arrived too late; but such a sudden and unlooked-for transition not only disordered the faculties of poor Monimia's mind, but also overpowered the organs of her body, already fatigued and enfeebled by the distresses she had undergone; so that she was taken ill of a fever that same night, and became delirious before morning, when a physician was called to her assistance.

While this gentleman was in the house, Madam Clement was visited by Fathom, who, after having complained, in the most insinuating manner that she had encouraged his wife to abandon her duty, told

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her a plausible story of his first acquaintance with Monimia, and his marriage at the Fleet, which, he said, he was ready to prove by the evidence of the clergyman who joined them, and that of Mrs. la Mer, who was present at the ceremony. The good lady, although a little staggered at the genteel appearance and engaging address of this stranger, could not prevail upon herself to believe that she had been imposed upon by her fair lodger, who by this time had given too convincing a proof of her sincerity; nevertheless, in order to prevent any dispute that might be prejudicial to the health or recovery of Monimia, she gave him to understand, that she would not at present enter upon the merits of the cause, but only assure him, that the young lady was actually bereft of her senses, and in imminent danger of her life; for the truth of which assertions she would appeal to his own observation, and the opinion of the physician, who was then employed in writing a prescription for the cure of her disease.

So saying, she conducted him into the chamber, where he beheld the hapless virgin stretched upon a sick-bed, panting under the violence of a distemper too mighty for her weakly frame, her hair dishevelled, and discomposure in her looks; all the roses of her youth were faded, yet all the graces of her beauty were not fled. She retained that sweetness and symmetry, which death itself could not destroy; and though her discourse was incoherent, her voice was still musical, resembling those feathered songsters who *warble their native wood-notes wild.*

Fathom, as upon all other occasions, so on this, did

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behave like an inimitable actor; he ran to the bedside, with all the trepidation of a distracted lover; he fell upon his knees, and, while the tears rolled down his cheeks, imprinted a thousand kisses on the soft hand of Monimia, who regarding him with a lack-lustre and undistinguishing eye, "Alas! Renaldo," said she, "we were born to be unhappy." "Would to Heaven," cried Ferdinand, in a transport of grief, "the wretch Renaldo had never been born! that is the villain who seduced the affection of this unfortunate woman. I admitted the traitor into my friendship and confidence, relieved him in his necessities; and, like the ungrateful viper, he hath stung the very bosom that cherished him in his distress." Then he proceeded to inform Madam Clement how he had delivered that same Renaldo from prison, maintained him afterwards at a great expense, and at length furnished him with a sum of money and proper credentials to support his interest at the Court of Vienna.

Having finished this detail, he asked the physician's sentiments of his wife's distemper, and being told that her life was in extreme jeopardy, begged he would use his utmost endeavours in her behalf, and even made him a tender of an extraordinary fee, which was refused. He also thanked Madam Clement for her charity and benevolence towards a stranger, and took his leave with many polite professions of gratitude and esteem. He had no sooner quitted the house, than the physician, who was a humane man, and a foreigner, began to caution the lady against his insinuations, observing, that some circumstances

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of the story concerning Renaldo were, to his particular knowledge, contrary to truth; for that he himself had been applied to for letters of recommendation in behalf of Count Melvil, by a Jew merchant of his acquaintance, who had supplied the young gentleman with money sufficient for his occasions, in consequence of a minute inquiry he had made into the character of Renaldo, who was, by all reports, a youth of strict honour and untainted morals.

Madam Clement, thus cautioned, entered into deliberation with her own thoughts, and, comparing the particulars of this account with those of Monimia's own story, she concluded that Fathom was the very traitor he himself had described; and that he had, by abusing the confidence of both, effected a fatal breach between two innocent and deserving lovers. She accordingly looked upon him with horror and detestation; but nevertheless resolved to treat him with civility in the meantime, that the poor young lady might not be disturbed in her last moments; for she had now lost all hopes of her recovery. Yet the fever abated, and in two days she retrieved the use of her reason; though the distemper had affected her lungs, and she was in all appearance doomed to linger a few weeks longer in a consumption.

Fathom was punctual in his visitation, though never admitted into her presence after the delirium vanished; and he had the opportunity of seeing her conveyed in a chariot to Kensington Gravel Pits, a place which may be termed the last stage of many a mortal peregrination. He now implicitly believed that death would in a few days baffle all his designs

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upon the unfortunate Monimia; and foreseeing that, as he had owned himself her husband, he might be obliged to defray the expenses incurred by her sickness and burial, he very prudently intermitted in his visits, and had recourse to the intelligence of his auxiliary.

As for Monimia, she approached the goal of life, not simply with resignation, but with rapture. She enjoyed in tranquillity the conversation of her kind benefactress, who never stirred from her apartment; she was blessed with the spiritual consolation of a worthy clergyman, who removed all her religious scruples; and she congratulated herself on the near prospect of that land of peace where sorrow is not known.

At length Mrs. la Mer gave notice to our adventurer of this amiable young lady's decease, and the time fixed for the interment. Upon which these two virtuous associates took possession of a place from whence they could, unperceived, behold the funeral. He must have a hard heart, who, without an emotion of pity, can see the last offices performed to a young creature cut off in the flower of youth and beauty, even though he knows not her name, and is an utter stranger to her virtues. How callous then must the soul of that wretch have been, who, without a symptom of remorse or concern, saw the sable hearse adorned with white plumes, as emblems of Monimia's purity, pass before him, while her incomparable merit stood full in his remembrance, and he knew himself the wicked cause of her untimely fate!

Perfidious wretch! thy crimes turn out so atrocious,

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that I half repent me of having undertaken to record thy memoirs; yet such monsters ought to be exhibited to public view, that mankind may be upon their guard against imposture; that the world may see how fraud is apt to overshoot itself; and that, as virtue, though it may suffer for a while, will triumph in the end; so iniquity, though it may prosper for a season, will at last be overtaken by that punishment and disgrace which are its due.

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CHAPTER FIFTY

FATHOM SHIFTS THE SCENE, AND APPEARS IN A NEW CHARACTER.

FATHOM'S expectations with respect to the fair orphan having thus proved abortive, he lost no time in bewailing his miscarriage, but had immediate recourse to other means of improving his small fortune, which, at this period, amounted to near two hundred pounds. Whatever inclination he had to resume the character he had formerly borne in the polite world, he durst not venture to launch out again into the expense necessary to maintain that station, because his former resources were now stopped, and all the people of fashion by this time convinced of his being a needy adventurer. Nevertheless, he resolved to sound the sentiments of his old friends at a distance, and judge, from the reception he should meet with, how far he might presume upon their countenance and favour. For he rightly supposed, that if he could in any shape contribute to their interest or amusement, they would easily forgive his former pretensions to quality, arrogant as they were, and still entertain him on the footing of a necessary acquaintance.

With this view, he one day presented himself at court in a very gay suit of clothes, and bowed, at a

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distance, to many of his old fashionable friends of both sexes, not one of whom favoured him with any other notice, than that of a quarter curtsey, or slight inclination of the head. For, by this time, the few that remembered him knew from what retirement he now emerged, and avoided him accordingly as the jail infection. But the greater part of those who had cultivated him in the zenith of his fortune were now utter strangers to his person, which they had actually forgot, amidst the succession of novelties that surrounded them; or, if they did recollect his name, it was remembered as an old fashion which had been many months out of date.

Notwithstanding these mortifying discouragements, our hero, that same evening, effected a lodgment in a certain gaming-house not far from St. James's; and, as he played pretty high, and made a parade of his ready money, he was soon recognised by divers persons of consequence, who cordially welcomed him to England, on pretence of believing he had been abroad, and with great complacency repeated their former professions of friendship. Though this was a certain way of retaining the favour of those worthies, while his finances continued to flourish, and his payments were prompt, he knew the weakness of his funds too well, to think they could bear the vicissitudes of play; and the remembrance of the two British knights who had spoiled him at Paris, hung over his imagination with the most frightful presages. Besides, he perceived that gaming was now managed in such a manner, as rendered skill and dexterity of no advantage. For the spirit of play having over-

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spread the land, like a pestilence, raged to such a degree of madness and desperation, that the unhappy people who were infected, laid aside all thoughts of amusement, economy, or caution, and risked their fortunes upon issues equally extravagant, childish, and absurd.

The whole mystery of the art was reduced to the simple exercise of tossing up a guinea, and the lust of laying wagers, which they indulged to a surprising pitch of ridiculous intemperance. In one corner of the room might be heard a pair of lordlings running their grandmothers against each other, that is, betting sums on the longest liver; in another the success of the wager depended upon the sex of the landlady's next child; and one of the waiters happening to drop down in an apoplectic fit, a certain noble peer exclaimed, "Dead for a thousand pounds." The challenge was immediately accepted; and when the master of the house sent for a surgeon to attempt the cure, the nobleman, who set the price upon the patient's head, insisted upon his being left to the efforts of nature alone, otherwise the wager should be void. Nay, when the landlord harped upon the loss he should sustain by the death of a trusty servant, his lordship obviated the objection, by desiring that the fellow might be charged in the bill.

In short, the rage of gaming seemed to have devoured all their other faculties, and to have equalled the rash enthusiasm of the inhabitants of Malacca in the East Indies, who are so possessed with that pernicious spirit, that they sacrifice to it not only their fortunes, but also their wives and children; and then

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letting their hair down upon their shoulders, in imitation of the ancient Lacedæmonians when they devoted themselves to death, those wretches unsheathe their daggers, and murder every living creature in their way. In this, however, they differ from the gamesters of our country, who never find their senses, until they have lost their fortunes, and beggared their families; whereas the Malays never *run amuck*, but in consequence of misery and despair.

Such are the amusements, or rather such is the continual employment of those hopeful youths who are destined by birth to be the judges of our property, and pillars of our constitution. Such are the heirs and representatives of those patriots who planned, and those heroes who maintained, the laws and freedom of their country; who were the patrons of merit, the fathers of the poor, the terror of vice and immorality, and at once the ornaments and support of a happy nation.

Our adventurer considered all these circumstances with his wonted sagacity, and, seeing upon what precarious footing he must stand, should he rank himself with such society, he wisely came to the resolution of descending one step in the degrees of life, and of taking upon him the title of physician, under which he did not despair of insinuating himself into the pockets of his patients, and into the secrets of private families, so as to acquire a comfortable share of practice, or captivate the heart of some heiress or rich widow, whose fortune would at once render him independent and happy.

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ASSUMES A NEW CHARACTER

After this determination, his next care was to concert measures for his first appearance in this new character; well knowing, that the success of a physician, in a great measure, depends upon the external equipage in which he first declares himself an adept in the healing art. He first of all procured a few books on the subject of medicine, which he studied with great attention during the remaining part of the winter and spring, and repaired to Tunbridge with the first of the season, where he appeared in the uniform of Æsculapius, namely, a plain suit, full trimmed, with a voluminous tie-periwig; believing that in this place he might glide, as it were, imperceptibly into the functions of his new employment, and gradually accustom himself to the method and form of prescription.

A man so well known in the gay world could not be supposed to effect such a transformation without being observed; and therefore, in order to anticipate the censure and ridicule of those who might be tempted to make themselves merry at his expense, he, on his arrival at the wells, repaired to the shop of an apothecary, and calling for pen, ink, and paper, wrote a prescription, which he desired might be immediately made up. While this was doing by the servant, he was invited into a parlour by the master, with whom he entered into conversation touching the properties of the Tunbridge water, which seemed to have been his particular study; and indeed he had perused Rouzee's treatise on that subject with indefatigable assiduity. From this theme, he made digressions into other parts of medicine,

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upon which he spoke with such plausible elocution, that the apothecary, whose knowledge in that art was not very profound, looked upon him as a physician of great learning and experience, and hinted a desire of knowing his name and situation.

Fathom accordingly gave him to understand, that he had studied physic, and taken his degrees at Padua, rather for his amusement, than with any view of exercising medicine, as he then could not possibly foresee the misfortunes which had since happened to his family, and by which he was now compelled to have recourse to a profession that was very much beneath the expectations of his birth. Yet he bore his disappointments with resignation, and even good-humour, and blessed his stars for having inclined him to the study of any branch of knowledge by which he might be enabled to laugh at the vicissitudes of fortune. He then observed, that he had practised with some applause at the hot well near Bristol, before he thought he should be ever reduced to the necessity of taking a fee; and that, in all probability, his metamorphosis, when known, would furnish matter of surprise and merriment to some of his old acquaintance.

The apothecary was equally struck with his polite address, and pleased with his agreeable discourse. He consoled him for the misfortunes of his family, by assuring him, that in England nothing could be more honourable, or indeed profitable, than the character of a physician, provided he could once wriggle himself into practice; and insinuated, that, although he was restricted by certain engagements with other

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persons of the faculty, he should be glad of an opportunity to show his regard for Doctor Fathom. This was a very effectual method which our hero took to intimate his new character to the public. By the industry and communicative disposition of the apothecary, it was circulated in half a day through every family in the place; and, next morning, when Ferdinand appeared, the company forthwith assembled in separate groups, and from each knot he heard his name reverberated in a whisper.

Having thus announced himself to all whom it might concern, and allowed the ladies two days to discuss the merit of his transfiguration, together with the novelty of the case, he ventured to salute, at a distance, a lady and her daughter, who had been his patients at the hot well; and, although they honoured his bow with the return of a slight curtsey, they gave him not the least encouragement to make a nearer approach. Notwithstanding this rebuff, he concluded, that, should the health of either come in question, they would renew their application to his skill, and what was refused by their pride would be granted by their apprehension. Here, however, he happened to be mistaken in his conjecture.

The young lady being seized with a violent headache and palpitation, her mother desired the apothecary to recommend a physician; and the person with whom he was contracted being at that time absent, he proposed Doctor Fathom as a man of great ability and discretion. But the good lady rejected the proposal with disdain, because she had formerly known him in the character of a Count — though that very

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character was the chief reason that had then induced her to crave his advice.

Such is the caprice of the world in general, that whatever bears the face of novelty captivates, or rather bewitches, the imagination, and confounds the ideas of reason and common sense. If, for example, a scullion, from the clinking of pewter, shall conceive a taste for the clinking of rhyme, and make shift to bring together twenty syllables, so as that the tenth and last shall have the like ending, the composition is immediately extolled as a miracle; and what appeals to the admiration is not the wit, the elegance, or poetry of the work, but the uncultivated talent and humble station of the author. A reader does not exclaim, "What a delicate sentiment! what a beautiful simile! what easy and musical versification!" — but cries in rapture, "Heavens! what a prodigy! a poet from the scullery! a muse in livery! or, Apollo with a trowel!" — The public is astonished into liberality — the scullion eats from those trenchers he scoured before — the footman is admitted into the coach behind which he was wont to stand — and the bricklayer, instead of plastering walls, bedaubs his *illustrious partner* with the mortar of his praise. Thus, lifted into a higher sphere, their talents receive cultivation; they become professed bards, and though their subsequent works bear evident marks of improvement, they are neglected among the rest of their brethren, because that novelty, which recommended them in the beginning, no longer remains.

So it fared with our adventurer in his new occupation. There was something so extraordinary in a

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nobleman's understanding medicine, and so uncommon in a physician's prescribing gratis, that the curiosity and admiration of the company at Bristol were engaged, and they followed his advice, as the direction of some supernatural intelligence. But, now that he professed himself one of the faculty, and might be supposed to have refreshed his memory, and reinforced his knowledge for the occasion, he was as much overlooked as any other physician unsupported by interest or cabal; or, at least, the notice he attracted was not at all to the advantage of his character, because it wholly regarded the decline of his fortune, which is a never-failing fund of disgrace.

These mortifications did not overcome the patience and perseverance of Fathom, who foresaw, that the soothing hand of time would cast a veil of oblivion over those scenes which were remembered to his prejudice; and that, in the meantime, though he was excluded from the private parties of the fair sex, in which his main hope of success was placed, he should be able to insinuate himself into some degree of favour and practice among the male patients; and some lucky cure, properly displayed, might be the means of propagating his fame, and banishing that reserve which at present interfered with his purpose. Accordingly, it was not long before he found means to break that spell of universal prejudice that hedged him in. At the ordinary which he frequented, his polite carriage, facetious remarks, and agreeable stories soon conciliated the regard of his fellow-guests, among whom he sometimes rallied his own transformation with singular good-humour and success. He was

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. ty upon his v t of employment, and used . rve that a pl. cian without practice had one . ich his rethren were strangers, namely, . had occasion to prescribe, the . conscience on account of being . of his fellow-creatures.

No ing s ly blunts the shafts of ridicule, and defeat of slander, as this method of anticipati of the arrows that were levelled against n from every tea-table at Tunbridge. party good among almost all the FERDINAND AS A MUSICIAN that frequented the place. his company, they began to court . and he was commonly seen in the . ded with a group of admirers.

thus paved the way for a total removal of . dious prepossession that obstructed his views, h e night, while every person was lulled in the . of repose, and universal silence prevailed, tuned violin, and began to play some masterly airs, in a ne so uncommonly expressive, and with such ravishing dexterity of execution, that a certain lady, who lodged in the same house, being waked by the music, and ignorant of the source from which it flowed, listened with rapture, as to the harp of an angel, and wrapping herself in a loose gown, rose and opened her chamber door, in order to discover in what apartment the musician resided. She no sooner entered the passage, than she found her fellow-lodgers already assembled on the same occasion; and there they remained during the best part of the night, transported by the harmony which our hero produced.

One night, when every person was lulled in the [illegible] of repose, and universal silence prevailed, he tuned [illegible] violin, and began to play some masterly airs, in a [illegible]

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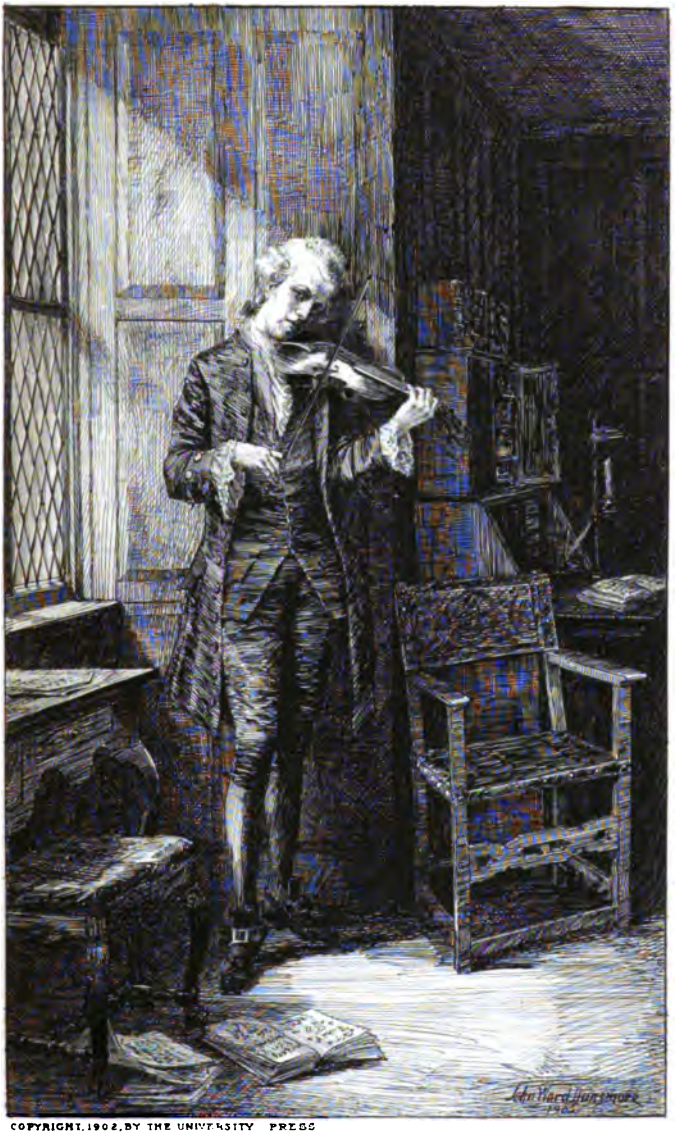

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Doctor Fathom was immediately known to be the author of this entertainment; and thus retrieved the benefit of that admiration which he had forfeited by appearing in the shape of a physician. For, as people had formerly wondered to see a count skilled in medicine, they were now amazed to find a physician such a master in music.

The good effects of this stratagem were almost instantaneous. His performance became the topic of discourse among all the fashionable company. His male friends complimented him from the information of the other sex; and that lady whom he had regaled, instead of that shyness and disdain with which she used to receive his salutation, at their very next meeting in the thoroughfare, returned his bow with marks of profound respect. Nay, at midnight, she, with the rest, took post in the same place where they had been stationed before; and, by frequent tittering, and repeated whispers, gave intimation to Fathom, that they would be glad of a second serenade. But he was too well acquainted with the human passions to indulge this their desire. It was his interest to inflame their impatience, rather than to gratify their expectation; and therefore he tantalised them for some hours, by tuning his violin, and playing some flourishes, which, however, produced nothing to fulfil their wishes.

At the ordinary, he was accosted by a gentleman, a lodger in the same house, who assured him, that the ladies would take it as a great favour if he would let them know when he intended to amuse himself again with his instrument, that they might not, by falling

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asleep beforehand, deprive themselves of the pleasure of hearing his music. To this message he replied, with an air of consequence and reserve, that, though music was not the art he professed, he should be always complaisant enough to entertain the ladies to the utmost of his power, when their commands were signified to him in a manner suited to his character; but that he would never put himself on the footing of an itinerate harper, whose music is tolerated through the medium of a board partition. The gentleman having reported this answer to his constituents, they empowered him to invite Doctor Fathom to breakfast, and he was next morning introduced with the usual ceremony, and treated with uncommon regard by all the females of the house, assembled for his reception.

Having thus broken the ice of their aversion in one part, so as that the beams of his personal accomplishments had room to operate, he soon effected a general thaw in his favour, and found himself growing once more into request amongst the most amiable part of the creation. His company was coveted, and his taste consulted in their balls, concerts, and private assemblies; and he recompensed the regard they paid to him with an incessant exertion of his agreeable talents, politeness, and good-humour.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE

TRIUMPHS OVER A MEDICAL RIVAL.

YET, in the midst of all this attention, his medical capacity seemed to be quite forgot. They respected his good breeding, were charmed with his voice, and admired the fine touches of his hand upon the violin; but in cultivating the fiddler, they utterly neglected the physician; and in vain did he attempt to divide their regard, by taking all opportunities to turn the conversation into a more interesting channel. It was to little purpose he endeavoured to arouse the wonder of his audience with frequent descriptions of portentous maladies and amazing cures he had seen and performed in the course of his study and practice abroad; and to no effect did he publicly busy himself in making experiments on the mineral water, in which he pretended to have made several new and important discoveries. These efforts did not make a lasting impression upon the minds of the company; because they saw nothing surprising in a physician's being acquainted with all the mysteries of his art; and, as their custom was already bespoke for others of the profession, whom it was their interest to employ, our adventurer might have starved amidst the caresses of his acquaintance, had not he derived

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considerable advantage from a lucky accident in the course of his expectancy.

A gentlewoman's daughter, of a weakly constitution, by drinking the waters, had so far recovered her health and complexion, as to allure the affection of a young squire in the neighbourhood, who amused her for some time with his addresses, until his heart was seduced by the charms of another young lady lately arrived at the wells. The forsaken nymph, shocked at this disgrace and mortification, relapsed into her former languishing disorder; and was by her mother put under the management and prescription of a physician, who had been an industrious enemy of Fathom from his first appearance at Tunbridge. The patient, though violently chagrined at the levity of her quondam admirer, was not altogether without hope, that the very same inconstancy which had prompted him to leave her, might in time induce him to return, after the novelty of his new passion should be wore off; and this hope served to support her under the sorrow and disgrace of her disappointment. At length, however, the squire and his new mistress disappeared; and some busybody was officious enough to communicate this piece of news to the forlorn shepherdess, with this additional circumstance, that they were gone to a neighbouring parish to be joined in the bands of wedlock.

These fatal tidings were no sooner imparted to the abandoned Phillis, than she was seized with an hysteric fit; and, what rendered the accident more unfortunate, her physician had been called to the country, and was not expected at Tunbridge till

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next day. The apothecary was immediately summoned; and, being either puzzled by the symptoms, or afraid of encroaching upon the province of his superiors, advised the old lady to send for Doctor Fathom without delay. She had no other objection to this expedient, but the enmity which she knew subsisted between the two leeches; yet, hearing that her own doctor would not consult with Fathom upon his return but, perhaps renounce the patient, by which means her daughter's health might be endangered, she would not solicit our hero's assistance, until the young lady had remained seven hours speechless and insensible; when, her fear prevailing over every other consideration, she implored the advice of our adventurer, who, having made the necessary interrogations, and felt the patient's pulse, which was regular and distinct, found reason to conclude that the fit would not last much longer, and, after having observed that she was in a very dangerous way, prescribed some medicines for external application; and, to enhance their opinion of his diligence and humanity, resolved to stay in the room and observe their effect.

His judgment did not fail him on this occasion. In less than half an hour after his embrocations had been applied, she recovered the use of her tongue, opened her eyes, and having, in delirious exclamations, upbraided her perfidious lover, became quite sensible and composed, though she continued extremely low and dejected. To remedy these sinkings, certain cordials were immediately administered, according to the prescription of Doctor Fathom,

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upon whom extraordinary encomiums were bestowed by all present, who believed he had actually rescued her from the jaws of death; and as he was by this time let into the secrets of the family, he found himself in a fair way of being an egregious favourite of the old gentlewoman; when, unluckily, his brother, having dismissed his country patient with uncommon despatch, entered the apartment, and eyed his rival with looks of inexpressible rage; then, surveying the patient, and the phials that stood upon the table, by turns, "What, in the name of God!" cried he, "is the meaning of all this trash!"

"Really, doctor," replied the mother, a little confounded at being thus taken by surprise, "Biddy has been taken dangerously ill, and lain seven or eight hours in a severe fit, from which I am confident she would never have recovered without the help of a physician; and as you were absent, we had recourse to this gentleman, whose prescription hath had a happy and surprising effect." "Effect!" cried this offended member of the faculty, "pshaw! — stuff! — who made you judge of effects or causes?" Then advancing to the patient, "What has been the matter, Miss Biddy, that you could not wait till my return?"

Here Fathom interposing, "Sir," said he, "if you will step into the next room, I will communicate my sentiments of the case, together with the method upon which I have proceeded, that we may deliberate upon the next step that is to be taken." Instead of complying with this proposal, he seated himself in a chair, with his back to our adventurer, and, while

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he examined Miss Biddy's pulse, gave him to understand, that he should not consult with him about the matter.

Fathom, not in the least disconcerted at this uncivil answer, walked round his antagonist, and, placing himself in his front, desired to know his reason for treating him with such supercilious contempt. "I am resolved," said the other, "never to consult with any physician who has not taken his degrees at either of the English universities." "Upon the supposition," replied our adventurer, "that no person can be properly educated for the profession at any other school." "You are in the right," answered Doctor Looby; "that is one of many reasons I have to decline the consultation."

"How far you are in the right," retorted Fathom, "I leave the world to judge, after I have observed, that, in your English universities, there is no opportunity of studying the art; no, not so much as a lecture given on the subject. Nor is there one physician of note in this kingdom who has not derived the greatest part of his medical knowledge from the instructions of foreigners."

Looby, incensed at this asseveration, which he was not prepared to refute, exclaimed, in a most infuriate accent, "Who are you?—whence came you?—where was you bred? You are one of those, I believe, who graduate themselves, and commence doctors, the Lord knows how; an interloper, who, without licence or authority, comes hither to take the bread out of the mouths of gentlemen who have been trained to the business in a regular manner, and bestowed great

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pains and expense to qualify themselves for the profession. For my own part, my education cost me fifteen hundred pounds."

"Never was money laid out to less purpose," said Ferdinand; "for it does not appear that you have learned so much as the basis of medical requirements, namely, that decorum and urbanity which ought to distinguish the deportment of every physician. You have even debased the noblest and most beneficial art that ever engaged the study of mankind, which cannot be too much cultivated, and too little restrained, in seeking to limit the practice of it to a set of narrow-minded, illiberal wretches, who, like the lowest handicraftsmen, claim the exclusive privileges of a corporation. Had you doubted my ability, you ought to have satisfied yourself in a manner consistent with decency and candour; but your behaviour on this occasion is such a malicious outrage upon good manners and humanity, that, were it not for my regard to these ladies, I would chastise you for your insolence on the spot. Meanwhile, madam," addressing himself to the mother, "you must give me leave to insist upon your dismissing either that gentleman, or me, without hesitation."

This peremptory language had an instantaneous effect upon the hearers. Looby's face grew pale, and his nether lip began to tremble. The patient was dismayed, and the old gentlewoman concerned and perplexed. She earnestly besought the gentlemen to be reconciled to each other, and enter into a friendly consultation upon her daughter's distemper; but, finding both equally averse to accommodation,

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and Fathom becoming more and more importunate in his demand, she presented him with a double fee; and giving him to understand that Doctor Looby had long attended the family, and was intimately acquainted with her own and Biddy's constitution, said, she hoped he would not take it amiss if she retained her old physician.

Though our hero was much mortified at this triumph of his rival, he made a virtue of necessity, and retired with great complaisance, wishing that Miss Biddy might never again be the subject of such a disagreeable dispute. Whether the patient was frighted at this altercation, or displeased with her mother's decision against an agreeable young fellow, who had, as it were, recalled her from the grave, and made himself master of the secret that rankled at her heart, or the disease had wound up her nerves for another paroxysm, certain it is, she all of a sudden broke forth into a violent peal of laughter, which was succeeded by the most doleful cries, and other expressions of grief; then she relapsed into a fit, attended with strong convulsions, to the unspeakable terror of the old gentlewoman, who entreated Doctor Looby to be expeditious in his prescription. Accordingly he seized the pen with great confidence, and a whole magazine of antihysteric medicines were, in different forms, externally and internally applied.

Nevertheless, either nature was disturbed in her own efforts by these applications, or the patient was resolved to disgrace the doctor. For the more remedies that were administered, her convulsions became

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the more violent; and in spite of all his endeavours, he could not overcome the obstinacy of the distemper. Such a miscarriage, upon the back of his rival's success, could not fail to overwhelm him with confusion; especially as the mother baited him with repeated entreaties to do something for the recovery of her daughter. At length, after having exercised her patience in vain for several hours, this affectionate parent could no longer suppress the suggestions of her concern, but, in an incoherent strain, told him that her duty would not suffer her to be longer silent in an affair on which depended the life of her dear child. That she had seen enough to believe he had mistaken the case of poor Biddy, and he could not justly blame her for recalling Doctor Fathom, whose prescription had operated in a miraculous manner.

Looby, shocked at this proposal, protested against it with great vehemence, as an expedient highly injurious to himself. "My remedies," said he, "are just beginning to take effect, and, in all probability, the fit will not last much longer; so that, by calling in another person at this juncture, you will defraud me of that credit which is my due, and deck my adversary with trophies to which he has no pretension." She was prevailed upon, by this remonstrance, to wait another half hour, when perceiving, as yet, no alteration for the better, and being distracted with her fears, which reproached her with want of natural affection, she sent a message to Doctor Fathom, desiring to see him with all possible despatch.

He was not slow in obeying the call, but hastening

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to the scene of action, was not a little surprised to find Looby still in the apartment. This gentleman, since better might not be, resolved to sacrifice his pride to his interest, and, rather than lose his patient altogether, and run the risk of forfeiting his reputation at the same time, stayed with intention to compromise his difference with Fathom, that he might not be wholly excluded from the honour of the cure, in case it could be effected. But he had reckoned without his host in his calculation of the Count's placability; for, when he put on his capitulating face, and, after a slight apology for his late behaviour, proposed that all animosity should subside in favour of the young lady, whose life was at stake, our hero rejected his advances with infinite disdain, and assured the mother, in a very solemn tone, that, far from consulting with a man who had treated him so unworthily, he would not stay another minute in the house, unless he should see him discarded; a satisfaction barely sufficient to atone for the affront he himself had suffered by the unjust preference she had before given to his rival.

There was no remedy. Looby was obliged to retreat in his turn; then our adventurer, approaching the bedside, reconnoitred the patient, examined the medicines which had been administered, and lifting up his eyes in expressive silence, detached the footman with a new order to the apothecary. It was well the messenger used expedition, otherwise Doctor Fathom would have been anticipated by the operation of nature; for, the fit having almost run its career, Miss Biddy was on the point of retrieving

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her senses, when the frontal prescribed by Fathom was applied; to the efficacy of this, therefore, was ascribed her recovery, when she opened her eyes, and began to pour forth unconnected ejaculations; and in a few moments after, she was persuaded to swallow a draught prepared for the purpose, her perception returned, and Ferdinand gained the reputation of having performed a second miracle.

But he was furnished with a piece of intelligence, of much more energy than all she had taken, and so soon as he concluded she was capable to bear the news without any dangerous emotion, he, among other articles of chit-chat culled for her amusement, took the opportunity of telling the company, that Squire Stub (the cause of Miss Biddy's disorder) had, in his way to matrimony, been robbed of his bride, by a gentleman to whom she had been formerly engaged. He had waited for her on purpose at an inn on the road, where he found means to appease her displeasure, which he had, it seems, incurred, and to supersede her new lover, whom she quitted without ceremony; upon which the squire had returned to Tunbridge, cursing her levity, yet blessing his good stars for having so seasonably prevented his ruin, which would have infallibly been the consequence of his marrying such an adventurer.

It would be superfluous to observe, that these tidings operated like an admirable specific on the spirits of the young lady, who, while she affected to pity the squire, was so much overjoyed at his disappointment, that her eyes began to sparkle with uncommon vivacity, and in less than two hours after the last of

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those terrible attacks, she was restored to a better state of health than she had enjoyed for many weeks. Fathom was not forgot amidst the rejoicings of the family. Besides an handsome gratuity for the effects of his extraordinary skill, the old lady favoured him with a general invitation to her house, and the daughter not only considered him as the restorer of her health, and angel of her good fortune, but also began to discover an uncommon relish for his conversation; so that he was struck with the prospect of succeeding Squire Stub in her affection. A conquest which, if sanctioned by the approbation of the mother, would console him for all the disappointments he had sustained; for Miss Biddy was entitled to a fortune of ten thousand pounds, provided she should marry with the consent of her parent, who was the sole executrix of the father's will.

Animated with the hope of such an advantageous match, our adventurer missed no opportunity of improving the lodgment he had made, while the two ladies failed not to extol his medical capacity among all their female acquaintances. By means of this circulation, his advice was demanded in several other cases, which he managed with such an imposing air of sagacity and importance, that his fame began to spread, and before the end of the season, he had ravished more than one half of the business from his competitor. Notwithstanding these fortunate events, he foresaw, that he should find great difficulty in transplanting his reputation, so as to take root in London, which was the only soil in which he could propose to rise to any degree of prosperity and inde-

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pendence; and this reflection was grounded upon a maxim which universally prevails among the English people, namely, to overlook and wholly neglect, on their return to the metropolis, all the connexions they may have chanced to acquire during their residence at any of the medical wells. And this social disposition is so scrupulously maintained, that two persons who lived in the most intimate correspondence at Bath or Tunbridge, shall in four-and-twenty hours so totally forget their friendship, as to meet in St. James's Park, without betraying the least token of recognition; so that one would imagine these mineral waters were so many streams issuing from the river Lethe, so famed of old for washing away all traces of memory and recollection.

Aware of this oblivious principle, Doctor Fathom collected all his qualifications, in order to make such an impression upon the heart of Miss Biddy, as would resist all her endeavours to shake him from her remembrance; and his efforts succeeded so well, that Squire Stub's advances to a reconciliation were treated with manifest indifference. In all probability our hero would have made a very advantageous campaign, had not his good fortune been retarded by an obstruction, which, as he did not perceive it, he could not possibly surmount. In displaying his accomplishments to captivate the daughter, he had unwittingly made an absolute conquest of the mother, who superintended the conduct of Miss Biddy with such jealous vigilance, that he could find no opportunity of profiting by the progress he had made in her heart; for the careful

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matron would never lose sight of her, no, not for one moment.

Had the old lady given the least intimation to our adventurer, of the sentiments she entertained in his behalf, his complaisance was of such a pliable texture, that he would have quitted his other pursuit, and made her the sole object of his attention. But she either depended upon the effect of his own good taste and discernment, or was too proud to disclose a passion which he had hitherto overlooked.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO

REPAIRS TO THE METROPOLIS, AND ENROLS HIMSELF AMONG THE SONS OF PÆAN.

BEFORE this affair could be brought to a proper explanation, the season being almost ended, the ladies departed from Tunbridge, and in a little time Doctor Fathom followed them to London, having previously obtained permission to visit them in that metropolis. He had solicited the same favour of some other families, in which he hoped to take root, though he knew they were pre-engaged to different physicians; and resolving to make his first medical appearance in London with some *éclat*, he not only purchased an old chariot, which was new painted for the purpose, but likewise hired a footman, whom he clothed in laced livery, in order to distinguish himself from the common run of his brethren.

This equipage, though much more expensive than his finances could bear, he found absolutely necessary to give him a chance for employment; as every shabby retainer to physic, in this capital, had provided himself with a vehicle, which was altogether used by way of a travelling sign-post, to draw in customers; so that a walking physician was considered as an obscure pedlar, trudging from street to

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street, with his pack of knowledge on his shoulders, and selling his remnants of advice by retail. A chariot was not now set up for the convenience of a man sinking under the fatigue of extensive practice, but as a piece of furniture every way as necessary as a large periwig with three tails; and a physician, let his merit, in other respects, be never so conspicuous, can no more expect to become considerable in business, without the assistance of this implement, than he can hope to live without food, or breathe without a windpipe.

This requisite is so well understood, that, exclusive of those who profess themselves doctors, every raw surgeon, every idle apothecary, who can make interest with some foolhardy coachmaker, may be seen dancing the bays in all places of public resort, and grinning to one another from their respective carriages. Hence proceed many of those cruel accidents which are recorded in the daily papers. An apothecary's horses take fright, and run away with his chariot, which is heard of no more. An eminent surgeon being overturned, is so terrified at the thoughts of mutilation, that he resolves to walk on foot all the days of his life; and the coachman of a physician of great practice, having the misfortune to be disabled by a fall from the box, his master can never find another to supply his place.

None of these observations escaped the penetrating eye of Fathom, who, before he pretended to seat himself in this machine, had made proper inquiry into all the other methods practised, with a view to keep the wheels in motion. In his researches, he found

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that the great world was wholly engrossed by a few practitioners who had arrived at the summit of reputation, consequently were no longer obliged to cultivate those arts by which they rose; and that the rest of the business was parcelled out into small enclosures, occupied by different groups of personages, male and female, who stood in rings, and tossed the ball from one to another, there being in each department two sets, the individuals of which relieved one another occasionally. Every knot was composed of a waiting-woman, nurse, apothecary, surgeon, and physician, and sometimes a midwife was admitted into the party; and in this manner the farce was commonly performed.

A fine lady, fatigued with idleness, complains of the vapours, is deprived of her rest, though not so sick as to have recourse to medicine. Her favourite maid, tired with giving her attendance in the night, thinks proper, for the benefit of her own repose, to complain of a violent headache, and recommends to her mistress a nurse of approved tenderness and discretion; at whose house, in all likelihood, the said chambermaid hath oft given the rendezvous to a male friend. The nurse, well skilled in the mysteries of her occupation, persuades the patient, that her malady, far from being slight or chimerical, may proceed to a very dangerous degree of the hysterical affection, unless it be nipt in the bud by some very effectual remedy. Then she recounts a surprising cure performed by a certain apothecary, and appeals to the testimony of the waiting-woman, who being the gossip of his wife, confirms the evidence, and

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corroborates the proposal. The apothecary being summoned, finds her ladyship in such a delicate situation, that he declines prescribing, and advises her to send for a physician without delay. The nomination of course falls to him, and the doctor being called, declares the necessity of immediate venesection, which is accordingly performed by a surgeon of the association.

This is one way of beginning the game. Though the commencement often varies, and sometimes the apothecary and sometimes the physician opens the scene; but, be that as it will, they always appear in a string, like a flight of wild geese, and each confederacy maintains a correspondence with one particular undertaker. Fathom, upon these considerations, set up his rest in the first floor of an apothecary in the neighbourhood of Charing Cross, to whom he was introduced by a letter from a friend at Tunbridge, and who being made acquainted with his ability and scheme, promised to let slip no opportunity of serving him; and, indeed, seemed to espouse his interest with great alacrity. He introduced him to some of his patients, on the strength of a gratis visit, sounded forth his praise among all the good women of his acquaintance; and even prevailed upon him to publish advertisements, importing that he would every day, at a certain time and place, give his advice to the poor for nothing; hoping that, by means of some lucky cure, his fame might be extended, and his practice grow into request.

In the meantime his chariot rolled along through

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all the most frequented streets, during the whole forenoon, and, at the usual hour, he never failed to make his appearance at the medical coffee-house, with all that solemnity of feature and address, by which the modern sons of *Pæan* are distinguished; not but that he was often puzzled about the decision of his diurnal route. For the method of driving up one street and down another, without halting, was become such a stale expedient, that the very 'prentices used to stand at the shop doors, and ridicule the vain parade. At length, however, he perused the map of London with great diligence, and, having acquired a distinct idea of its topography, used to alight at the end of long narrow thoroughfares and paved courts, where the chariot was ordered to wait till his return; and, walking with great gravity through the different turnings of these alleys, regain his carriage by another passage, and resume his seat with an air of vast importance. With a view to protract the time of his supposed visits, he would, at one place, turn aside to a wall; at another, cheapen an urinal; at a third corner, read a quack advertisement, or lounge a few minutes in some bookseller's shop; and, lastly, glide into some obscure coffee-house, and treat himself with a dram of usquebaugh.

The other means used to force a trade, such as ordering himself to be called from church, alarming the neighbourhood with knocking at his door in the night, receiving sudden messages in places of resort, and inserting his cures by way of news in the daily papers, had been so injudiciously hackneyed by every

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desperate sculler in physic, that they had lost their effect upon the public, and therefore were excluded from the plan of our adventurer, whose scheme, for the present, was to exert himself in winning the favour of those sage Sibyls, who keep, as it were, the temple of medicine, and admit the young priest to the service of the altar; but this he considered as a temporary project only, until he should have acquired interest enough to erect an hospital, lock, or infirmary, by the voluntary subscription of his friends, a scheme which had succeeded to a miracle with many of the profession, who had raised themselves into notice upon the carcases of the poor.

Yet even this branch was already overstocked, insomuch that almost every street was furnished with one of these charitable receptacles, which, instead of diminishing the taxes for the maintenance of the poor, encouraged the vulgar to be idle and dissolute, by opening an asylum to them and their families, from the diseases of poverty and intemperance. For it remains to be proved, that the parish rates are decreased, the bills of mortality lessened, the people more numerous, or the streets less infested with beggars, notwithstanding the immense sums yearly granted by individuals for the relief of the indigent.

But, waiving these reflections, Doctor Fathom hoped, that his landlord would be a most useful implement for extending his influence, and, for that reason, admitted him into a degree of partnership, after being fully convinced that he was not under articles to any other physician. Nevertheless, he was very much mistaken in reckoning on the importance of his new

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ally, who was, like himself, a needy adventurer, settled upon credit, and altogether unemployed, except among the very refuse of the people, whom no other person would take the trouble to attend. So that our hero got little else than experience and trouble, excepting a few guineas which he made shift to glean among sojourners, with whom he became occasionally acquainted, or young people, who had been unfortunate in their amours.

In the midst of these endeavours, he did not omit his duty to the old gentlewoman, whose daughter he had cured at Tunbridge; and was always received with particular complacency, which, perhaps, he, in some measure, owed to his genteel equipage, that gave credit to every door before which it was seen; yet, Miss Biddy was as inaccessible as ever, while the mother became more and more warm in her civilities, till at length, after having prepared him with some extraordinary compliments, she gave him to understand, that Biddy was no better than a giddy-headed girl, far from being unexceptionable in her moral character, and particularly deficient in duty and gratitude to her, who had been always a tender and indulgent parent; she was therefore determined to punish the young minx for her levity and want of natural affection, by altering her own condition, could she find a worthy and agreeable man, on whom she could bestow her hand and fortune without a blush.

The film was instantly removed from Fathom's eyes by this declaration, which she uttered with such a significancy of look, as thrilled to his soul with

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joyful presage, while he replied, it would, indeed, be a difficult task to find a man who merited such happiness and honour; but, surely, some there were, who would task their faculties to the uttermost, in manifesting their gratitude, and desire of rendering themselves worthy of such distinction. Though this answer was pronounced in such a manner as gave her to understand he had taken the hint, she would not cheapen her condescension so much as to explain herself further at that juncture, and he was very well contented to woo her on her own terms; accordingly he began to season his behaviour with a spice of gallantry, when he had opportunities of being particular with this new inamorata, and, in proportion to the returns she made, he gradually detached himself from Miss Biddy, by intermitting, and, at last, discontinuing those ardent expressions of love and admiration, which he had made shift to convey in private looks and stolen whispers, during the rancorous inspection of her mother.

Such alteration could not long escape the jealous eyes of the young lady, no more than the cause of this alienation, which, in a moment, converted all her love into irreconcilable hate, and filled her whole soul with the most eager desire of vengeance. For she now not only considered him as a mercenary wretch, who had slighted her attractions for the sordid gratifications of avarice, but also as an interloper, who wanted to intercept her fortune, in the odious character of a father-in-law. But, before she could bring her aim to any ripeness of contrivance, her mother, having caught cold at church,

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was seized with a rheumatic fever, became delirious in less than three days, and, notwithstanding all the prescriptions and care of her admirer, gave up the ghost, without having retrieved the use of her senses, or been able to manifest, by will, the sentiments she entertained in favour of her physician, who, as the reader will easily perceive, had more reasons than one to be mortally chagrined at this event.

Miss Biddy being thus put in possession of the whole inheritance, not only renounced all correspondence with Doctor Fathom, by forbidding him the house, but likewise took all opportunities of prejudicing his character, by hinting, that her dear mamma had fallen a sacrifice to his ignorance and presumption.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE

ACQUIRES EMPLOYMENT IN CONSEQUENCE OF A LUCKY MISCARRIAGE.

THESE ill offices, however, far from answering her purpose, had a quite contrary effect. For, in consequence of her invectives, he was, in a few days, called to the wife of a merchant, who piously hoped, that his practice would not give Miss Biddy the lie. The patient had long lingered under a complication of distempers, and being in no immediate danger of her life, Doctor Fathom was in no hurry to strike a decisive stroke; till the husband growing impatient of delay, and so explicit in his hints, that it was impossible to misapprehend his meaning, our adventurer resolved to do something effectual for his satisfaction, and prescribed a medicine of such rough operation, as he thought must either oblige his employer, or produce a change in the lady's constitution, that would make a noise in the world, and bring a new accession to his fame.

Proceeding upon these maxims, he could not be disappointed. The remedy played its part with such violence, as reduced the patient to extremity, and the merchant had actually bespoke an undertaker; when, after a series of swoonings and convulsions,

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nature so far prevailed, as to expel, at once, the prescription and the disease; yet the good-natured husband was so much affected with the agonies to which he saw the wife of his bosom exposed by this specific, that, although the effect of it was her perfect recovery, he could never bear the sight of Fathom for the future, nor even hear his name mentioned, without giving signs of horror and indignation. Nay, he did not scruple to affirm, that, had our adventurer been endowed with the least tincture of humanity, he would have suffered the poor woman to depart in peace, rather than restore her to health, at the expense of such anxiety and torture.

On the other hand, this extraordinary cure was blazoned abroad by the good lady and her gossips, with such exaggerations as roused the astonishment of the public, and concurred with the report of his last miscarriage to bring him upon the carpet, as the universal subject of discourse. When a physician becomes the town talk, he generally concludes his business more than half done, even though his fame should wholly turn upon his mal-practice; insomuch that some members of the faculty have been heard to complain, that they never had the good fortune to be publicly accused of homicide; and it is well known, that a certain famous empiric, of our day, never flourished to any degree of wealth and reputation till after he had been attacked in print, and fairly convicted of having destroyed a good number of the human species. Success raised upon such a foundation would, by a disciple of Plato, and some modern moralists, be ascribed to the innate virtue

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and generosity of the human heart, which naturally espouses the cause that needs protection. But I, whose notions of human excellence are not quite so sublime, am apt to believe it is owing to that spirit of self-conceit and contradiction, which is, at least, as universal, if not as natural, as the moral sense so warmly contended for by those ideal philosophers.

The most infamous wretch often finds his account in these principles of malevolence and self-love. For wheresoever his character falls under discussion there is generally some person present, who, either from an affectation of singularity, or envy to the accusers, undertakes his defence, and endeavours to invalidate the articles of his impeachment, until he is heated by altercation, and hurried into more effectual measures for his advantage. If such benefits accrue to those who have no real merit to depend upon, surely our hero could not but reap something extraordinary from the debates to which he now gave rise; as, by the miraculous cure he had affected, all his patient's friends, all the enemies of her husband, all those who envied his other adversary, were interested in his behalf, exclusive of such admirers as surprise and curiosity might engage in his cause.

Thus wafted upon the wings of applause, his fame soon diffused itself into all the corners of this great capital. The newspapers teemed with his praise; and in order to keep up the attention of the public, his emissaries, male and female, separated into different coffee-houses, companies, and clubs, where they did not fail to comment upon these articles of intelligence. Such a favourable incident is, of itself,

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sufficient to float the bark of a man's fortune. He was, in a few days, called to another lady, labouring under the same disorder he had so successfully dispelled, and she thought herself benefited by his advice. His acquaintance naturally extended itself among the visitants and allies of his patients; he was recommended from family to family; the fees began to multiply; a variety of footmen appeared every day at his door; he discontinued his sham circuit, and looking upon the present conjuncture, as that tide in his affairs, which, according to Shakespeare, when taken at the full, leads on to fortune, he resolved that the opportunity should not be lost, and applied himself with such assiduity to his practice, that, in all likelihood, he would have carried the palm from all his contemporaries, had he not split upon the same rock which had shipwrecked his hopes before.

We have formerly descanted upon that venereal appetite which glowed in the constitution of our adventurer, and with all his philosophy and caution could hardly keep within bounds. The reader, therefore, will not be much surprised to learn, that, in the exercise of his profession, he contracted an intimacy with a clergyman's wife, whom he attended as a physician, and whose conjugal virtue he subdued by a long and diligent exertion of his delusive arts, while her mind was enervated by sickness, and her husband abroad upon his necessary occasions. This unhappy patient, who was a woman of an agreeable person and lively conversation, fell a sacrifice to her own security and self-conceit; her want of health had confined her to a sedentary life, and her imagination

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being active and restless, she had spent those hours in reading which other young women devote to company and diversion, but, as her studies were not superintended by any person of taste, she had indulged her own fancy without method or propriety. The Spectator taught her to be a critic and philosopher; from plays she learned poetry and wit, and derived her knowledge of life from books of history and adventures. Fraught with these acquisitions, and furnished by nature with uncommon vivacity, she despised her own sex, and courted the society of men, among whom she thought her talents might be more honourably displayed, fully confident of her own virtue and sagacity, which enabled her to set all their arts at defiance.

Thus qualified, she, in an evil hour, had recourse to the advice of our adventurer, for some ailment under which she had long laboured, and found such relief from his skill as very much prepossessed her in his favour. She was no less pleased with his obliging manners than with his physic, and found much entertainment in his conversation, so that the acquaintance proceeded to a degree of intimacy, during which he perceived her weak side, and being enamoured of her person, flattered her out of all her caution. The privilege of his character furnished him with opportunities to lay snares for her virtue, and, taking advantage of that listlessness, languor, and indolence of the spirits, by which all the vigilance of the soul is relaxed, he, after a long course of attention and perseverance, found means to make shipwreck of her peace.

Though he mastered her chastity, he could not

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quiet her conscience, which incessantly upbraided her with breach of the marriage vow; nor did her undoer escape without a share of the reproaches suggested by her penitence and remorse. This internal anxiety co-operating with her disease, and perhaps with the medicines he prescribed, reduced her to the brink of the grave; when her husband returned from a neighbouring kingdom, in consequence of her earnest request, joined to the information of her friends, who had written to him an account of the extremity in which she was. The good man was afflicted beyond measure when he saw himself upon the verge of losing a wife whom he had always tenderly loved; but what were his emotions, when she, taking the first opportunity of his being alone with her, accosted him to this effect:

"I am now hastening towards that dissolution from which no mortal is exempted, and though the prospect of futurity is altogether clouded and uncertain, my conscience will not allow me to plunge into eternity without unburdening my mind, and, by an ingenuous confession, making all the atonement in my power for the ingratitude I have been guilty of, and the wrongs I have committed against a virtuous husband, who never gave me cause of complaint. You stand amazed at this preamble, but alas! how will you be shocked when I own that I have betrayed you in your absence, that I have trespassed against God and my marriage vow, and fallen from the pride and confidence of virtue to the most abject state of vice; yes, I have been unfaithful to your bed, having fallen a victim to the infernal insinuations of a villain,

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who took advantage of my weak and unguarded moments. Fathom is the wretch who hath thus injured your honour, and ruined my unsuspecting innocence. I have nothing to plead in alleviation of my crime but the most sincere contrition of heart, and though, at any other juncture, I could not expect your forgiveness, yet, as I now touch the goal of life, I trust in your humanity and benevolence for that pardon which will lighten the sorrows of my soul, and those prayers which I hope will entitle me to favour at the throne of grace."

The poor husband was so much overwhelmed with grief and confusion at this unexpected address that he could not recollect himself till after a pause of several minutes, when uttering a hollow groan, "I will not," said he, "aggravate your sufferings, by reproaching you with my wrongs, though your conduct hath been but an ill return for all my tenderness and esteem. I look upon it as a trial of my Christian patience, and bear my misfortune with resignation; meanwhile, I forgive you from my heart, and fervently pray that your repentance may be acceptable to the Father of Mercy." So saying, he approached her bedside, and embraced her in token of his sincerity. Whether this generous condescension diffused such a composure upon her spirits as tended to the ease and refreshment of nature, which had been almost exhausted by disease and vexation, certain it is, that from this day she began to struggle with her malady in surprising efforts, and hourly gained ground, until her health was pretty well re-established.

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This recovery was so far beyond the husband's expectation, that he began to make very serious reflections on the event, and even to wish he had not been quite so precipitate in pardoning the backslidings of his wife; for, though he could not withhold his compassion from a dying penitent, he did not at all relish the thoughts of cohabiting, as usual, with a wife self-convicted of the violation of the matrimonial contract; he therefore considered his declaration as no more than a provisional pardon, to take place on condition of her immediate death, and, in a little time, not only communicated to her his sentiments on this subject, but also separated himself from her company, secured the evidence of her maid, who had been confidant in her amour with Fathom, and immediately set on foot a prosecution against our adventurer, whose behaviour to his wife he did not fail to promulgate, with all its aggravating circumstances. By these means the doctor's name became so notorious that every man was afraid of admitting him into his house, and every woman ashamed of soliciting his advice.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR

HIS ECLIPSE, AND GRADUAL DECLINATION.

MISFORTUNES seldom come single; upon the back of this hue and cry he unluckily prescribed phlebotomy to a gentleman of some rank, who chanced to expire during the operation, and quarrelled with his landlord the apothecary, who charged him with having forgot the good offices he had done him in the beginning of his career, and desired he would provide himself with another lodging.

All these mishaps, treading upon the heels of one another, had a very mortifying effect upon his practice. At every tea-table his name was occasionally put to the torture, with that of the vile creature whom he had seduced, though it was generally taken for granted by all those female casuists, that she must have made the first advances, for it could not be supposed that any man would take much trouble in laying schemes for the ruin of a person whose attractions were so slender, especially considering the ill state of her health, a circumstance that seldom adds to a woman's beauty or good-humour; besides, she was always a pert minx, that affected singularity, and a masculine manner of speaking, and many of

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them had foreseen that she would, some time or other, bring herself into such a premunire. At all gossipings, where the apothecary or his wife assisted, Fathom's pride, ingratitude, and malpractice were canvassed; in all clubs of married men he was mentioned with marks of abhorrence and detestation, and every medical coffee-house rung with his reproach. Instances of his ignorance and presumption were quoted, and many particulars feigned for the purpose of defamation, so that our hero was exactly in the situation of a horseman, who, in riding at full speed for the plate, is thrown from the saddle in the middle of the race, and left without sense or motion upon the plain.

His progress, though rapid, had been so short, that he could not be supposed to have laid up store against such a day of trouble, and as he still cherished hopes of surmounting those obstacles which had so suddenly started up in his way, he would not resign his equipage nor retrench his expenses, but appeared as usual in all public places with that serenity and confidence of feature which he had never deposited, and maintained his external pomp upon the little he had reserved in the days of his prosperity, and the credit he had acquired by the punctuality of his former payments. Both these funds, however, failed in a very little time, his lawsuit was a gulf that swallowed up all his ready money, and the gleanings of his practice were scarce sufficient to answer his pocket expenses, which now increased in proportion to the decrease of business, for, as he had more idle time, and was less admitted into private

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families, so he thought he had more occasion to enlarge his acquaintance among his own sex, who alone were able to support him in his disgrace with the other. He accordingly listed himself in several clubs, and endeavoured to monopolise the venereal branch of trade, though this was but an indifferent resource, for almost all his patients of this class were such as either could not, or would not, properly recompense the physician.

For some time he lingered in this situation, without going upwards or downwards, floating like a wisp of straw at the turning of the tide, until he could no longer amuse the person of whom he had hired his coach-horses, or postpone the other demands, which multiplied upon him every day. Then was his chariot overturned with a hideous crash, and his face so much wounded with the shivers of the glass, which went to pieces in the fall, that he appeared in the coffee-house with half a dozen black patches upon his countenance, gave a most circumstantial detail of the risk he had run, and declared, that he did not believe he should ever hazard himself again in any sort of wheel carriage.

Soon after this accident, he took an opportunity of telling his friends, in the same public place, that he had turned away his footman on account of his drunkenness, and was resolved, for the future, to keep none but maids in his service, because the men-servants are generally impudent, lazy, debauched, or dishonest; and after all, neither so neat, handy, or agreeable as the other sex. In the rear of this resolution, he shifted his lodgings into a private

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court, being distracted with the din of carriages, that disturb the inhabitants who live towards the open street; and gave his acquaintance to understand, that he had a medical work upon the anvil, which he could not finish without being indulged in silence and tranquillity. In effect, he gradually put on the exteriors of an author. His watch, with an horizontal movement by Graham, which he had often mentioned, and shown as a very curious piece of workmanship, began, about this time, to be very much out of order, and was committed to the care of a mender, who was in no hurry to restore it. His tie-wig degenerated into a major; he sometimes appeared without a sword, and was even observed in public with a second day's shirt. At last, his clothes became rusty; and when he walked about the streets, his head turned round in a surprising manner, by an involuntary motion in his neck, which he had contracted by a habit of reconnoitring the ground, that he might avoid all dangerous or disagreeable encounters.

Fathom, finding himself descending the hill of fortune with an acquired gravitation, strove to catch at every twig, in order to stop or retard his descent. He now regretted the opportunities he had neglected, of marrying one of several women of moderate fortune, who had made advances to him in the zenith of his reputation; and endeavoured, by forcing himself into a lower path of life than any he had hitherto trod, to keep himself afloat, with the portion of some tradesman's daughter, whom he meant to espouse. While he exerted himself in this pursuit,

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he happened, in returning from a place about thirty miles from London, to become acquainted, in the stage-coach, with a young woman of a very homely appearance, whom, from the driver's information, he understood to be the niece of a country justice, and daughter of a soap-boiler, who had lived and died in London, and left her, in her infancy, sole heiress of his effects, which amounted to four thousand pounds. The uncle, who was her guardian, had kept her sacred from the knowledge of the world, resolving to effect a match betwixt her and his own son; and it was with much difficulty he had consented to this journey, which she had undertaken as a visit to her own mother, who had married a second husband in town.

Fraught with these anecdotes, Fathom began to put forth his gallantry and good-humour, and, in a word, was admitted by the lady to the privilege of an acquaintance, in which capacity he visited her during the term of her residence in London; and, as there was no time to be lost, declared his honourable intentions. He had such a manifest advantage, in point of personal accomplishments, over the young gentleman who was destined for her husband, that she did not disdain his proposals; and, before she set out for the country, he had made such progress in her heart, that the day was actually fixed for their nuptials, on which he faithfully promised to carry her off in a coach and six. How to raise money for this expedition was all the difficulty that remained; for, by this time, his finances were utterly dried up, and his credit altogether exhausted. Upon a very pres-

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sing occasion, he had formerly applied himself to a certain wealthy quack, who had relieved his necessities by lending him a small sum of money, in return for having communicated to him a secret medicine, which he affirmed to be the most admirable specific that ever was invented. The nostrum had been used, and, luckily for him, succeeded in the trial; so that the empiric, in the midst of his satisfaction, began to reflect, that this same Fathom, who pretended to be in possession of a great many remedies, equally efficacious, would certainly become a formidable rival to him in his business, should he ever be able to extricate himself from his present difficulties.

In consequence of these suggestions, he resolved to keep our adventurer's head under water, by maintaining him in the most abject dependence. Accordingly he had, from time to time, accommodated him with small trifles, which barely served to support his existence, and even for these had taken notes of hand, that he might have a scourge over his head, in case he should prove insolent or refractory. To this benefactor Fathom applied for a reinforcement of twenty guineas, which he solicited with the more confidence, as that sum would certainly enable him to repay all other obligations. The quack would advance the money upon no other condition, than that of knowing the scheme, which being explained, he complied with Ferdinand's request; but, at the same time, privately despatched an express to the young lady's uncle, with a full account of the whole conspiracy; so that, when the doctor arrived at the inn, according to appointment, he was received by his worship in

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person, who gave him to understand, that his niece had changed her mind, and gone fifty miles farther into the country to visit a relation. This was a grievous disappointment to Fathom, who really believed his mistress had forsaken him through mere levity and caprice, and was not undeceived till several months after her marriage with her cousin, when, at an accidental meeting in London, she explained the story of the secret intelligence, and excused her marriage, as the effect of rigorous usage and compulsion.

Had our hero been really enamoured of her person, he might have probably accomplished his wishes, notwithstanding the steps she had taken. But this was not the case. His passion was of a different nature, and the object of it effectually without his reach. With regard to his appetite for women, as it was an infirmity of his constitution, which he could not overcome, and as he was in no condition to gratify it at a great expense, he had of late chosen a housekeeper from the hundreds of Drury, and, to avoid scandal, allowed her to assume his name. As to the intimation which had been sent to the country justice, he immediately imputed it to the true author, whom he marked for his vengeance accordingly; but, in the meantime, suppressed his resentment, because he in some measure depended upon him for subsistence. On the other hand, the quack, dreading the forwardness and plausibility of our hero, which might, one time or other, render him independent, put a stop to those supplies, on pretence of finding them inconvenient; but, out of his friendship and goodwill to Fathom, undertook to

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procure for him such letters of recommendation as would infallibly make his fortune in the West Indies, and even to set him out in a genteel manner for the voyage. Ferdinand preceived his drift, and thanked him for his generous offer, which he would not fail to consider with all due deliberation; though he was determined against the proposal, but obliged to temporise, that he might not incur the displeasure of this man, at whose mercy he lay. Meanwhile the prosecution against him in Doctors' Commons drew near a period, and the lawyers were clamorous for money, without which, he foresaw he should lose the advantage which his cause had lately acquired by the death of his antagonist's chief evidence; he therefore, seeing every other channel shut up, began to doubt, whether the risk of being apprehended or slain in the character of a highwayman, was not overbalanced by the prospect of being acquitted of a charge which had ruined his reputation and fortune, and actually entertained thoughts of taking the air on Hounslow Heath, when he was diverted from this expedient by a very singular adventure.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE

AFTER DIVERS UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS, HE HAS RECOURSE TO THE MATRIMONIAL NOOSE.

CHANCING to meet with one of his acquaintance at a certain coffee-house, the discourse turned upon the characters of mankind, when, among other oddities, his friend brought upon the carpet a certain old gentlewoman of such a rapacious disposition, that, like a jackdaw, she never beheld any metalline substance, without an inclination, and even an effort to secrete it for her own use and contemplation. Nor was this infirmity originally produced from indigence, inasmuch as her circumstances had been always affluent, and she was now possessed of a considerable sum of money in the funds; notwithstanding which, the avarice of her nature tempted her to let lodgings, though few people could live under the same roof with such an original, who, rather than be idle, had often filched pieces of her own plate, and charged her servants with the theft, or hinted suspicion of her lodgers. Fathom, struck with the description, soon perceived how this woman's disease might be converted to his advantage; and after having obtained sufficient intelligence, on pretence of satisfy-

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ing his curiosity, he visited the widow, in consequence of a bill at her door, and actually hired an apartment in her house, whither he forthwith repaired with his inamorata.

It was not long before he perceived that his landlady's character had not been misrepresented. He fed her distemper with divers inconsiderable trinkets, such as copper medals, corkscrews, odd buckles, and a paltry seal set in silver, which were, at different times, laid as baits for her infirmity, and always conveyed away with remarkable eagerness, which he and his Dulcinea took pleasure in observing from an unsuspected place. Thus confirmed in his opinion, he, at length, took an opportunity of exposing a metal watch that belonged to his mistress, and saw it seized with great satisfaction, in the absence of his helpmate, who had gone abroad on purpose. According to instruction, she soon returned, and began to raise a terrible clamour about the loss of her watch; upon which she was condoled by her landlady, who seemed to doubt the integrity of the maid, and even proposed that Mrs. Fathom should apply to some justice of the peace for a warrant to search the servant's trunk. The lady thanked her for the good advice, in compliance with which she had immediate recourse to a magistrate, who granted a search warrant, not against the maid, but the mistress; and she, in a little time, returned with the constable at her back.

These precautions being taken, Doctor Fathom desired a private conference with the old gentlewoman, in which he gave her to understand, that he

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had undoubted proofs of her having secreted, not only the watch, but also several other odd things of less consequence, which he lost since his residence in her house. He then showed the warrant he had obtained against her, and asked if she had anything to offer why the constable should not do his duty? Inexpressible were the anguish and confusion of the defendant, when she found herself thus entrapped, and reflected, that she was on the point of being detected of felony; for she at once concluded, that the snare was laid for her, and knew that the officer of justice would certainly find the unlucky watch in one of the drawers of her scrutoire.

Tortured with these suggestions, afraid of public disgrace, and dreading the consequence of legal conviction, she fell on her knees before the injured Fathom, and, after having imputed her crime to the temptations of necessity, implored his compassion, promised to restore the watch, and everything she had taken, and begged he would dismiss the constable, that her reputation might not suffer in the eye of the world.

Ferdinand, with a severity of countenance purposely assumed, observed that, were she really indigent, he had charity enough to forgive what she had done; but, as he knew her circumstances were opulent, he looked upon this excuse as an aggravation of her guilt, which was certainly the effect of a vicious inclination; and he was therefore determined to prosecute her with the utmost severity of the law, as an example and terror to others, who might be infected with the same evil disposition. Finding him deaf to all her

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tears and entreaties, she changed her note, and offered him one hundred guineas, if he would compromise the affair, and drop the prosecution, so as that her character should sustain no damage. After much argumentation, he consented to accept of double the sum, which being instantly paid in East India bonds, Doctor Fathom told the constable, that the watch was found; and for once her reputation was patched up. This seasonable supply enabled our hero to stand trial with his adversary, who was nonsuited, and also to mend his external appearance, which of late had not been extremely magnificent.

Soon after this gleam of good fortune, a tradesman, to whom he was considerably indebted, seeing no other probable means to recover his money, introduced Fathom to the acquaintance of a young widow who lodged at his house, and was said to be in possession of a considerable fortune. Considering the steps that were taken, it would have been almost impossible for him to miscarry in his addresses. The lady had been bred in the country, was unacquainted with the world, and of a very sanguine disposition, which her short trial of matrimony had not served to cool. Our adventurer was instructed to call at the tradesman's house, as if by accident, at an appointed time, when the widow was drinking tea with her landlady. On these occasions he always behaved to admiration. She liked his person, and praised his politeness, good-humour, and good sense; his confederates extolled him as a prodigy of learning, taste, and good-nature; they likewise represented him as a person on the eve of eclipsing all his competitors in

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physic. An acquaintance and intimacy soon ensued, nor was he restricted in point of opportunity. In a word, he succeeded in his endeavours, and, one evening, on pretence of attending her to the play, he accompanied her to the Fleet, where they were married, in presence of the tradesman and his wife, who were of the party.

This grand affair being accomplished to his satisfaction, he, next day, visited her brother, who was a counsellor of the Temple, to make him acquainted with the step his sister had taken; and though the lawyer was not a little mortified to find that she had made such a clandestine match, he behaved civilly to his new brother-in-law, and gave him to understand, that his wife's fortune consisted of a jointure of one hundred and fifty pounds a year, and fifteen hundred pounds bequeathed to her during her widowhood, by her own father, who had taken the precaution of settling it in the hands of trustees, in such a manner as that any husband she might afterwards espouse should be restricted from encroaching upon the capital, which was reserved for the benefit of her heirs. This intimation was far from being agreeable to our hero, who had been informed, that this sum was absolutely at the lady's disposal, and had actually destined the greatest part of it for the payment of his debts, for defraying the expense of furnishing an elegant house, and setting up a new equipage.

Notwithstanding this disappointment, he resolved to carry on his plan upon the credit of his marriage, which was published in a very pompous article of the newspapers; a chariot was bespoke, a ready furnished

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house immediately taken, and Doctor Fathom began to reappear in all his former splendour.

His good friend the empiric, alarmed at this event, which not only raised our adventurer into the sphere of a dangerous rival, but also furnished him with means to revenge the ill office he had sustained at his hands on the adventure of the former match — for, by this time, Fathom had given him some hints, importing, that he was not ignorant of his treacherous behaviour — roused, I say, by these considerations, he employed one of his emissaries, who had some knowledge of Fathom's brother-in-law, to prejudice him against our adventurer, whom he represented as a needy sharper, not only overwhelmed with debt and disgrace, but likewise previously married to a poor woman, who was prevented by nothing but want from seeking redress at law. To confirm these assertions, he gave him a detail of Fathom's encumbrances, which he had learned for the purpose, and even brought the counsellor into company with the person who had lived with our hero before marriage, and who was so much incensed at her abrupt dismission, that she did not scruple to corroborate these allegations of the informer.

The lawyer, startled at this intelligence, set on foot a minute inquiry into the life and conversation of the doctor, which turned out so little to the advantage of his character and circumstances, that he resolved, if possible, to disunite him from his family; and, as a previous step, repeated to his sister all that he had heard to the prejudice of her husband, not forgetting to produce the evidence of his mistress,

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who laid claim to him by a prior title, which, she pretended, could be proved by the testimony of the clergyman who joined them. Such an explanation could not fail to inflame the resentment of the injured wife, who, at the very first opportunity, giving a loose to the impetuosity of her temper, upbraided our hero with the most bitter invectives for his perfidious dealing.

Ferdinand, conscious of his own innocence, which he had not always to plead, far from attempting to soothe her indignation, assumed the authority and prerogative of a husband, and sharply reprehended her for her credulity and indecent warmth. This rebuke, instead of silencing, gave new spirit and volubility to her reproaches, in the course of which she plainly taxed him with want of honesty and affection, and said that, though his pretence was love, his aim was no other than a base design upon her fortune.

Fathom, stung with these accusations, which he really did not deserve, replied with uncommon heat, and charged her in his turn with want of sincerity and candour, in the false account she had given of that same fortune before marriage. He even magnified his own condescension, in surrendering his liberty to a woman who had so little to recommend her to the addresses of the other sex; a reflection which provoked this mild creature to such a degree of animosity, that, forgetting her duty and allegiance, she lent him a box on the ear with such energy as made his eyes water; and he, for the honour of manhood and sovereignty, having washed her face with a

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dish of tea, withdrew abruptly to a coffee-house in the neighbourhood, where he had not long remained, when his passion subsided, and he then saw the expediency of an immediate reconciliation, which he resolved to purchase, even at the expense of a submission.

It was pity that such a salutary resolution had not been sooner taken. For, when he returned to his own house, he understood, that Mrs. Fathom had gone abroad in a hackney-coach; and, upon examining her apartment, in lieu of her clothes and trinkets, which she had removed with admirable dexterity and despatch, he found this billet in one of the drawers of her bureau: — "Sir, being convinced that you are a cheat and an impostor, I have withdrawn myself from your cruelty and machinations, with a view to solicit the protection of the law; and I doubt not but I shall soon be able to prove, that you have no just title to, or demand upon, the person or effects of the unfortunate Sarah Muddy."

The time had been when Mr. Fathom would have allowed Mrs. Muddy to refine at her leisure, and blessed God for his happy deliverance; but at present the case was quite altered. Smarting as he was from the expense of lawsuits, he dreaded a prosecution for bigamy, which, though he had justice on his side, he knew he could not of himself support. Besides, all his other schemes of life were frustrated by this unlucky elopement. He therefore speedily determined to anticipate, as much as in him lay, the malice of his enemies, and to obtain, without delay, authentic documents of his marriage. With this

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view, he hastened to the house of the tradesman, who, with his wife, had been witness to the ceremony and consummation; and, in order to interest them the more warmly in his cause, made a pathetic recital of this unhappy breach, in which he had suffered such injury and insult. But all his rhetoric would not avail. Mrs. Muddy had been beforehand with him, and had proved the better orator of the two; for she had assailed this honest couple with such tropes and figures of eloquence, as were altogether irresistible.

Nevertheless, they heard our hero to an end, with great patience. Then the wife, who was the common mouth upon all such occasions, contracting her features into a very formal disposition, "I'll assure you," said she, "Doctor Fathom, my husband and I have been in a very great terrification and numplush, to hear such bad things of a person, whom, as one may say, we thought a worthy gentleman, and were ready to serve at all times, by day and by night, as the saying is. And besides, for all that, you know, and God knows, as we are dustrious people, and work hard for what we get, and we have served gentlemen to our own harm, whereby my husband was last Tuesday ser ed with a siserary, being that he was bound for an officer that ran away. And I said to my husband, Timothy, says I, 't is a very hard thing for one to ruin one's self for stranger people — There 's Doctor Fathom, says I, his account comes to nine-and-forty pounds seven shillings and fourpence halfpenny; and you know, doctor, that was before your last bill began. But, howsomever, little did I

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think, as how a gentleman of your learning would go to deceive a poor gentlewoman, when you had another wife alive."

In vain did our adventurer endeavour to vindicate himself from this aspersion; the good woman, like a great many modern disputants, proceeded with her declamation, without seeming to hear what was said on the other side of the question; and the husband was altogether neutral. At length, Ferdinand, finding all his protestations ineffectual, "Well," said he, "though you are resolved, I see, to discredit all that I can say in opposition to that scandalous slander, of which I can easily acquit myself in a court of justice, surely you will not refuse to grant me a certificate, signifying that you were present at the ceremony of my marriage with this unhappy woman." "You shall excuse us," replied the female orator; "people cannot be too wary in signing their names in this wicked world; many a one has been brought to ruination by signing his name, and my husband shall not, with my goodwill, draw himself into such a primmineery."

Fathom, alarmed at this refusal, earnestly argued against the inhumanity and injustice of it, appealing to their own consciences for the reasonableness of his proposal; but, from the evasive answers of the wife, he had reason to believe, that, long before the time of trial, they would take care to have forgotten the whole transaction.

Though he was equally confounded and incensed at this instance of their perfidy, he durst not manifest his indignation, conscious of the advantage they

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had over him in divers respects; but repaired, without loss of time, to the lodging of the clergyman who had noosed him, resolved to consult his register, and secure his evidence. Here too his evil genius had got the start of him; for the worthy ecclesiastic not only could not recollect his features, or find his name in the register, but, when importuned by his pressing remonstrances, took umbrage at the freedom of his behaviour, and threatened, if he would not immediately take himself away, to raise the posse of the Fleet, for the safety of his own person.

Rather than put the pastor to the trouble of alarming his flock, he retreated with a heavy heart, and went in quest of his mistress, whom he had dismissed at his marriage, in hopes of effecting a reconciliation, and preventing her from joining in the conspiracy against him. But, alas! he met with such a reception as he had reason to expect from a slighted woman, who had never felt any real attachment for his person. She did not upbraid him with his cruelty in leaving her as a mistress, but, with a species of effrontery never enough to be admired, reproached him with his villany, in abandoning her, who was his true and lawful wife, to go and ruin a poor gentlewoman, by whose fortune he had been allured.

When he attempted to expostulate with this virago, upon the barbarity of this assertion, she very prudently declined engaging in private conversation with such an artful and wicked man; and, calling up the people of the house, insisted upon his being conducted to the door.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX

IN WHICH HIS FORTUNE IS EFFECTUALLY STRANGLED.

THE last resource, and that upon which he least depended, was the advice and assistance of his old friend the empiric, with whom he still maintained a slight correspondence; and to whose house he steered his course, in great perplexity and tribulation. That gentleman, instead of consoling him with assurances of friendship and protection, faithfully recapitulated all the instances of his indiscretion and misconduct, taxed him with want of sincerity in the West India affair, as well as with want of honesty in this last marriage, while his former wife was alive; and, finally, reminded him of his notes, which he desired might be immediately taken up, as he (the quack) had present occasion for a sum of money.

Ferdinand, seeing it would be impracticable to derive any succour from this quarter, sneaked homewards, in order to hold a consultation with his own thoughts; and the first object that presented itself to his eyes when he entered his apartment, was a letter from the tradesman, with his account inclosed, amounting to forty-five pounds, which the writer desired might be paid without delay. Before he

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had time to peruse the articles, he received a summons, in consequence of a bill of indictment for bigamy, found against him in Hicks' Hall, by Sarah Muddy, widow; and, while he was revolving measures to avert these storms, another billet arrived from a certain attorney, giving him to understand, that he had orders from Doctor Buffalo, the quack, to sue him for the payment of several notes, unless he would take them up in three days from the date of this letter.

Such a concurrence of sinister events made a deep impression upon the mind of our adventurer. All his fortitude was insufficient to bear him up against this torrent of misfortunes; his resources were all dried up, his invention failed, and his reflection began to take a new turn. "To what purpose," said he to himself, "have I deserted the paths of integrity and truth, and exhausted a fruitful imagination, in contriving schemes to betray my fellow-creatures, if, instead of acquiring a splendid fortune, which was my aim, I have suffered such a series of mortifications, and at last brought myself to the brink of inevitable destruction? By a virtuous exertion of those talents I inherit from nature and education, I might, long before this time, have rendered myself independent, and, perhaps, conspicuous in life. I might have grown up like a young oak, which, being firmly rooted in its kindred soil, gradually raises up its lofty head, expands its leafy arms, projects a noble shade, and towers the glory of the plain. I should have paid the debt of gratitude to my benefactors, and made their hearts sing with joy for the happy

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effects of their benevolence. I should have been a bulwark to my friends, a shelter to my neighbours in distress. I should have run the race of honour, seen my fame diffused like a sweet-smelling odour, and felt the ineffable pleasure of doing good. Whereas I am, after a vicissitude of disappointments, dangers, and fatigues, reduced to misery and shame, aggravated by a conscience loaded with treachery and guilt. I have abused the confidence and generosity of my patron; I have defrauded his family, under the mask of sincerity and attachment; I have taken the most cruel and base advantages of virtue in distress; I have seduced unsuspecting innocence to ruin and despair; I have violated the most sacred trust reposed in me by my friend and benefactor; I have betrayed his love, torn his noble heart asunder, by means of the most perfidious slander and false insinuations; and, finally, brought to an untimely grave the fairest pattern of human beauty and perfection. Shall the author of these crimes pass with impunity? Shall he hope to prosper in the midst of such enormous guilt? It were an imputation upon Providence to suppose it! Ah, no! I begin to feel myself overtaken by the eternal justice of Heaven! I totter on the edge of wretchedness and woe, without one friendly hand to save me from the terrible abyss!"

These reflections, which, perhaps, the misery of his fellow-creatures would never have inspired, had he himself remained without the verge of misfortune, were now produced from the sensation of his own calamities; and, for the first time, his cheeks were

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bedewed with the drops of penitence and sorrow. "Contraries," saith Plato, "are productive of each other." Reformation is oftentimes generated from unsuccessful vice; and our adventurer was, at this juncture, very well disposed to turn over a new leaf in consequence of those salutary suggestions; though he was far from being cured beyond the possibility of a relapse. On the contrary, all the faculties of his soul were so well adapted, and had been so long habituated to deceit, that, in order to extricate himself from the evils that environed him, he would not, in all probability, have scrupled to practise it upon his own father, had a convenient opportunity occurred.

Be that as it may, he certainly, after a tedious and fruitless exercise of his invention, resolved to effect a clandestine retreat from that confederacy of enemies which he could not withstand, and once more join his fortune to that of Renaldo, whom he proposed to serve, for the future, with fidelity and affection, thereby endeavouring to atone for the treachery of his former conduct. Thus determined, he packed up his necessaries in a portmanteau, attempted to amuse his creditors with promises of speedy payment, and, venturing to come forth in the dark, took a place in the Canterbury stage-coach, after having converted his superfluities into ready money. These steps were not taken with such privacy as to elude the vigilance of his adversaries; for, although he had been cautious enough to transport himself and his baggage to the inn on Sunday evening, and never doubted that the vehicle, which set out at four o'clock on Monday morning, would

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convey him out of the reach of his creditors, before they could possibly obtain a writ for securing his person, they had actually taken such precautions as frustrated all his finesse; and the coach being stopped in the borough of Southwark, Doctor Fathom was seized by virtue of a warrant obtained on a criminal indictment, and was forthwith conducted to the prison of the King's Bench; yet, not before he had, by his pathetic remonstrances, excited the compassion, and even drawn tears from the eyes of his fellow-passengers.

He no sooner recollected himself from the shock which must have been occasioned by this sinister incident, than he despatched a letter to his brother-in-law, the counsellor, requesting an immediate conference, in which he promised to make such a proposal as would save him all the expense of a lawsuit and trial, and, at the same time, effectually answer all the purposes of both. He was accordingly favoured with a visit from the lawyer, to whom, after the most solemn protestations of his own innocence, he declared, that, finding himself unable to wage war against such powerful antagonists, he had resolved even to abandon his indubitable right, and retire into another country, in order to screen himself from persecution, and remove all cause of disquiet from the prosecutrix, when he was, unfortunately, prevented by the warrant which had been executed against him. He said he was still willing, for the sake of his liberty, to sign a formal renunciation of his pretensions to Mrs. Fathom and her fortune, provided the deeds could be executed, and the war-

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rant withdrawn, before he should be detained by his other creditors; and, lastly, he conjured the barrister to spare himself the guilt and the charge of suborning evidence for the destruction of an unhappy man, whose misfortune was his only fault.

The lawyer felt the force of his expostulations; and though he would by no means suppose him innocent of the charge of bigamy, yet, under the pretext of humanity and commiseration, he undertook to persuade his sister to accept of a proper release, which, he observed, would not be binding, if executed during the confinement of Fathom; he therefore took his leave, in order to prepare the papers, withdraw the action, and take such other measures as would hinder the prisoner from giving him the slip. Next day, he returned with an order to release our hero, who, being formally discharged, was conducted by the lawyer to a tavern in the neighbourhood, where the releases were exchanged, and everything concluded with amity and concord. This business being happily transacted, Fathom stept into a hackney-coach, with his baggage, and was followed by a bailiff, who told him, with great composure, that he was again a prisoner, at the suit of Doctor Buffalo, and desired the coachman to reconduct him to the lodging he had so lately discharged.

Fathom, whose fortitude had been hitherto of the pagan temper, was now fain to reinforce it with the philosophy of Christian resignation, though he had not as yet arrived to such a pitch of self-denial as to forgive the counsellor, to whose double dealing he imputed this new calamity. After having received

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the compliments of the jailer on his recommitment, he took pen, ink, and paper, and composed an artful and affecting epistle to the empiric, imploring his mercy, flattering his weakness, and demonstrating the bad policy of cooping up an unhappy man in a jail, where he could never have an opportunity of doing justice to his creditors; nor did he forget to declare his intention of retiring into another country, where he might have some chance of earning a subsistence, which he had so long toiled for to no purpose in England. This last declaration he made in consequence of the jealous disposition of the quack, who he knew had long looked upon him in the odious light of an interloping rival. However, he reaped no benefit from this supplication, which served only to gratify the pride of Buffalo, who produced the extravagant encomiums which Fathom had bestowed upon him, as so many testimonials of his foe's bearing witness to his virtue.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-SEVEN

FATHOM BEING SAFELY HOUSED, THE READER IS ENTERTAINED WITH A RETROSPECT.

BUT now it is high time to leave our adventurer to chew the cud of reflection and remorse in this solitary mansion, that we may trace Renaldo in the several steps he took to assert his right, and do justice to his family. Never man indulged a more melancholy train of ideas than that which accompanied him in his journey to the Imperial court. For, notwithstanding the manifold reasons he had to expect a happy issue to his aim, his imagination was incessantly infected with something that chilled his nerves and saddened his heart, recurring, with quick succession, like the unwearied wave that beats upon the bleak, inhospitable Greenland shore. This, the reader will easily suppose, was no other than the remembrance of the forlorn Monimia, whose image appeared to his fancy in different attitudes, according to the prevalence of the passions which raged in his bosom. Sometimes he viewed her in the light of apostasy, and then his soul was maddened with indignation and despair. But these transitory blasts were not able to efface the impressions she had formerly made upon his heart; impressions which he had so often and so long

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contemplated with inconceivable rapture. These pictures still remained, representing her fair as the most perfect idea of beauty, soft and tender as an angel of mercy and compassion, warmed with every virtue of the heart, and adorned with every accomplishment of human nature. Yet the alarming contrast came still in the rear of this recollection; so that his soul was by turns agitated by the tempests of horror, and overwhelmed by the floods of grief.

He recalled the moment on which he first beheld her, with that pleasing regret which attends the memory of a dear deceased friend. Then he bitterly cursed it, as the source of all his misfortunes and affliction. He thanked Heaven for having blessed him with a friend to detect her perfidy and ingratitude; and then ardently wished he had still continued under the influence of her delusion. In a word, the loneliness of his situation aggravated every horror of his reflection; for, as he found himself without company, his imagination was never solicited, or his attention diverted from these subjects of woe; and he travelled to Brussels in a reverie, fraught with such torments as must have entirely wrecked his reason, had not Providence interposed in his behalf. He was, by his postillion, conducted to one of the best inns of the place, where he understood the cloth was already laid for supper; and as the ordinary is open to strangers in all these houses of entertainment, he introduced himself into the company, with a view to alleviate, in some measure, his sorrow and chagrin, by the conversation of his fel-

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low-guests. Yet he was so ill prepared to obtain the relief which he courted, that he entered the apartment, and sat down to table, without distinguishing either the number or countenances of those who were present, though he himself did not long remain so unregarded. His mien and deportment produced a prepossession in his favour; and the air of affliction, so remarkable in his visage, did not fail to attract their sympathy and observation.

Among the rest, was an Irish officer in the Austrian service, who having eyed Renaldo attentively, "Sir," said he, rising, "if my eyes and memory do not deceive me, you are the Count de Melvil, with whom I had the honour to serve upon the Rhine during the last war." The youth, hearing his own name mentioned, lifted up his eyes, and at once recognising the other to be a gentleman who had been a captain in his father's regiment, ran forwards, and embraced him with great affection.

This was, in divers respects, a fortunate rencontre for young Melvil; as the officer was not only perfectly well acquainted with the situation of the Count's family, but also resolved, in a few days, to set out for Vienna, whither he promised to accompany Renaldo, as soon as he understood his route lay the same way. Before the day fixed for their departure arrived, this gentleman found means to insinuate himself so far into the confidence of the Count, as to learn the cause of that distress which he had observed in his features at their first meeting; and being a gentleman of uncommon vivacity, as well as sincerely attached to the family of Melvil, to which he had

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owed his promotion, he exerted all his good-humour and good sense in amusing the fancy, and reasoning down the mortification of the afflicted Hungarian. He in particular endeavoured to wean his attention from the lost Monimia, by engaging it upon his domestic affairs, and upon the wrongs of his mother and sister, who, he gave him to understand, were languishing under the tyranny of his father-in-law.

This was a note that effectually roused him from the [illegible] of his sorrow; and the desire of taking RENALDO IS RECOGNISED BY MAJOR [illegible] the oppressor, who had ruined his [illegible] made his nearest relations miserable, so [illegible] crossed his thoughts, as to leave no room [illegible] considerations. During their journey to [illegible], Major Farrel, (that was the name of his fellow-traveller) informed him of many circumstances touching his father's house, to which himself was an utter stranger.

"The conduct of your mother," said he, "in marrying Count Trebasi, was not at all agreeable either to the friends of the Count de Melvil, or to her own relations, who knew her second husband to be a man of a violent temper, and rapacious disposition, which the nature of his education and employment had served rather to inflame than allay; for you well know he was a partisan during the whole course of the late war. They were, moreover, equally surprised and chagrined, when they found she took no step to prevent his seizing upon that inheritance, which of right belonged to you, and which by the laws of Hungary is unalienable from the heir of blood. Nevertheless, they are now fully convinced, that she

"*Sir, if my eyes [illegible] are the Count de Melvil, [illegible] to serve during the last war.*

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hath more than sufficiently atoned for her indiscretion, by the barbarity of her husband, who hath not only secluded her from all communication with her friends and acquaintance, but even confined her to the west tower of your father's house, where she is said to be kept close prisoner, and subjected to all sorts of inconvenience and mortification. This severity she is believed to have incurred in consequence of having expostulated to him upon his unjust behaviour to you and Mademoiselle, whom he hath actually shut up in some convent in Vienna, which your relations have not as yet been able to discover. But the memory of your noble father is so dear to all those who were favoured with his friendship, and the sufferings of the Countess and Mademoiselle have raised such a spirit of resentment against her cruel jailor, that nothing is wanted but your presence to begin the prosecution, and give a sanction to the measures of your friends, which will in a little time restore your family to the fruition of its rights and fortune. For my own part, my dear Count, I consider myself as one wholly indebted to your house for the rank and expectation I now enjoy; and my finances, interest, and person, such as they are, I dedicate to your service."

Renaldo was not slow in making his acknowledgments to this generous Hibernian, whom he informed of his scheme, recounting to him his uncommon transaction with the benevolent Jew, and communicating the letters of recommendation he had received by his means to some of the first noblemen at the Imperial court. Meanwhile, he burned with impa-

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tience to chastise Count Trebasi for his perfidious conduct to the widow and the fatherless, and would have taken the road to Presburg, without touching at Vienna, in order to call him to a severe account, had not he been strenuously opposed by Major Farrel, who represented the imprudence of taking such a step before he had secured a proper protection from the consequences with which it might be attended.

"It is not," said he, "your own life and fortune only which depend upon your behaviour in this emergency, but also the quiet and happiness of those who are most dear to your affection. Not you alone, but likewise your mother and sister, would infallibly suffer by your temerity and precipitation. First of all, deliver your credentials at court, and let us join our endeavours to raise an interest strong enough to counterbalance that of Trebasi. If we succeed, there will be no necessity for having recourse to personal measures. He will be compelled to yield up your inheritance which he unjustly detains, and to restore your sister to your arms; and if he afterwards refuses to do justice to the Countess, you will always have it in your power to evince yourself the son of the brave Count de Melvil."

These just and salutary representations had a due effect upon Renaldo, who no sooner arrived at the capital of Austria, than he waited upon a certain prince of distinction, to whose patronage he was commended; and from whom he met with a very cordial reception, not only on account of his credentials, but also for the sake of his father, who was

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well known to his highness. He heard his complaints with great patience and affability, assured him of his assistance and protection, and even undertook to introduce him to the empress-queen, who would not suffer the weakest of her subjects to be oppressed, much less disregard the cause of an injured young nobleman, who, by his own services, and those of his family, was peculiarly entitled to her favour.

Nor was he the only person whose countenance and patronage Melvil solicited upon this occasion; he visited all the friends of his father, and all his mother's relations, who were easily interested in his behalf; while Major Farrel contributed all his efforts in strengthening the association. So that a lawsuit was immediately commenced against Count Trebasi, who on his side was not idle, but prepared with incredible industry for the assault, resolving to maintain with his whole power the acquisition he had made.

The laws of Hungary, like those of some other countries I could name, afford so many subterfuges for the purposes of perfidy and fraud, that it is no wonder our youth began to complain of the slow progress of his affair; especially as he glowed with the most eager desire of redressing the grievances of his parent and sister, whose sufferings he did not doubt were doubled since the institution of his process against their tormentor. He imparted his sentiments on this head to his friend; and, as his apprehensions every moment increased, plainly told him he could no longer live without making some effort to see those with whom he was so nearly connected

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in point of blood and affection. He therefore resolved to repair immediately to Presburg; and, according to the intelligence he should procure, essay to see and converse with his mother, though at the hazard of his life.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-EIGHT

RENALDO ABRIDGES THE PROCEEDINGS AT LAW, AND APPROVES HIMSELF THE SON OF HIS FATHER.

THE Major, finding him determined, insisted upon attending him in this expedition, and they set out together for Presburg, where they privately arrived in the dark, resolving to keep themselves concealed at the house of a friend, until they should have formed some plan for their future operations. Here they were informed that Count Trebasi's castle was altogether inaccessible; that all the servants who were supposed to have the least veneration or compassion for the Countess were dismissed; and that, since Renaldo was known to be in Germany, the vigilance and caution of that cruel husband was redoubled to such a degree, that nobody knew whether his unfortunate lady was actually alive or dead.

Farrel perceiving Melvil exceedingly affected with this intimation, and hearing him declare that he would never quit Presburg until he should have entered the house, and removed his doubts on that interesting subject, not only argued with great vehemence against such an attempt, as equally dangerous and indiscreet, but solemnly swore he would prevent his purpose, by discovering his design to the

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family, unless he would promise to listen to a more moderate and feasible expedient. He then proposed that he himself should appear in the equipage of one of the travelling Savoyards who stroll about Europe, amusing ignorant people with the effects of a magic lanthorn, and in that disguise endeavour to obtain admittance from the servants of Trebasi, among whom he might make such inquiries as would deliver Melvil from his present uneasy suspense.

This proposal was embraced, though reluctantly, by Renaldo, who was unwilling to expose his friend to the least danger or disgrace; and the Major being next day provided with the habit and implements of his new profession, together with a ragged attendant who preceded him, extorting music from a paltry viol, approached the castle gate, and proclaimed his show so naturally in a yell, partaking of the scream of Savoy and the howl of Ireland, that one would have imagined he had been conductor to Madam Catherina from his cradle. So far his stratagem succeeded; he had not long stood in waiting before he was invited into the court-yard, where the servants formed a ring, and danced to the efforts of his companion's skill; then he was conducted into the buttery, where he exhibited his figures on the wall, and his princess on the floor; and while they regaled him in this manner with scraps and sour wine, he took occasion to inquire about the old lady and her daughter, before whom he said he had performed in his last peregrination. Though this question was asked with all that air of simplicity which is peculiar to these people, one of the domestics took the alarm,

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being infected with the suspicions of his master, and plainly taxed the Major with being a spy, threatening at the same time that he should be stripped and searched.

This would have been a very dangerous experiment for the Hibernian, who had actually in his pocket a letter to the Countess from her son, which he hoped fortune might have furnished him with an opportunity to deliver. When he therefore found himself in this dilemma, he was not at all easy in his own mind. However, instead of protesting his innocence in an humble and beseeching strain, in order to acquit himself of the charge, he resolved to elude the suspicion by provoking the wrath of his accuser, and, putting on the air of vulgar integrity affronted, began to reproach the servant in very insolent terms for his unfair supposition, and undressed himself in a moment to the skin, threw his tattered garments in the face of his adversary, telling him he would find nothing there which he would not be very glad to part with; at the same time raising his voice, he, in the gibberish of the clan he represented, scolded and cursed with great fluency, so that the whole house resounded with the noise. The valet's jealousy, like a smaller fire, was in a trice swallowed up in the greater flame of his rage enkindled by this abrupt address. In consequence of which, Farrel was kicked out at the gate, naked as he was to the waist, after his lanthorn had been broke to pieces on his head; and there he was joined by his domestic, who had not been able to recover his apparel and effect a retreat, without incurring marks of the same sort of distinction.

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The Major, considering the risk he must have run in being detected, thought himself cheaply quit for this moderate discipline, though he was really concerned for his friend Renaldo, who, understanding the particulars of the adventure, determined, as the last effort, to ride round the castle in the open day, on pretence of taking the air, when, peradventure, the Countess would see him from the place of her confinement, and favour him with some mark or token of her being alive.

Though his companion did not much relish this plan, which he foresaw would expose him to the insults of Trebasi, yet, as he could not contrive a better, he acquiesced in Renaldo's invention, with the proviso that he would defer the execution of it until his father-in-law should be absent in the chase, which was a diversion he every day enjoyed.

Accordingly they set a proper watch, and lay concealed until they were informed of Trebasi's having gone forth; when they mounted their horses, and rode into the neighbourhood of the castle. Having made a small excursion in the adjoining fields, they drew nearer the walls, and at an easy pace had twice circled them, when Farrel descried, at the top of a tower, a white handkerchief waved by a woman's hand through the iron bars that secured the window. This signal being pointed out to Renaldo, his heart began to throb with great violence; he made a respectful obeisance towards the part in which it appeared, and perceiving the hand beckoning him to approach, advanced to the very buttress of the turret; upon which, seeing something drop, he

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alighted with great expedition, and took up a picture of his father in miniature, the features of which he no sooner distinguished, than the tears ran down his cheeks; he pressed the little image to his lips with the most filial fervour; then conveying it to his bosom, looked up to the hand, which waved in such a manner as gave him to understand it was high time to retire. Being by this time highly persuaded that his kind monitor was no other than the Countess herself, he pointed to his heart, in token of his filial affection, and laying his hand on his sword, to denote his resolution of doing her justice, he took his leave with another profound bow, and suffered himself to be reconducted to his lodging.

Every circumstance of this transaction was observed by the servants of Count Trebasi, who immediately despatched a messenger to their lord, with an account of what had happened. Alarmed at this information, from which he immediately concluded that the stranger was young Melvil, he forthwith quitted the chase, and returning to the castle by a private postern, ordered his horse to be kept ready saddled, in hope that his son-in-law would repeat the visit to his mother. This precaution would have been to no purpose, had Renaldo followed the advice of Farrel, who represented the danger of returning to a place where the alarm was undoubtedly given by his first appearance; and exhorted him to return to Vienna for the prosecution of his suit, now that he was satisfied of his mother's being alive. In order to strengthen this admonition, he bade him recollect

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the signal for withdrawing, which was doubtless the effect of maternal concern, inspired by the knowledge of the Count's vigilance and vindictive disposition.

Notwithstanding these suggestions, Melvil persisted in his resolution of appearing once more below the tower, on the supposition that his mother, in expectation of his return, had prepared a billet for his acceptance, from which he might obtain important intelligence. The Major, seeing him lend a deaf ear to his remonstrances, was contented to attend him in his second expedition, which he pressed him to undertake that same afternoon, as Trebasi had taken care to circulate a report of his having gone to dine at the seat of a nobleman in the neighbourhood. Our knight-errant and his squire, deceived by this finesse, presented themselves again under the prison of the Countess, who no sooner beheld her son return, than she earnestly entreated him to be gone, by the same sign which she had before used; and he, taking it for granted that she was debarred the use of pen, ink, and paper, and that she had nothing more to expect, consented to retire, and had already moved to some distance from the house, when, in crossing a small plantation that belonged to the castle, they were met by Count Trebasi and another person on horseback.

At sight of this apparition, the blood mounted into Renaldo's cheeks, and his eyes began to lighten with eagerness and indignation; which was not at all diminished by the ferocious address of the Count, who advancing to Melvil, with a menacing air.

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"Before you proceed," said he, "I must know with what view you have been twice to-day patroling round my enclosures, and reconnoitring the different avenues of my house. You likewise carry on a clandestine correspondence with some person in the family, of which my honour obliges me to demand an explanation."

"Had your actions been always regulated by the dictates of honour," replied Renaldo, "I should never have been questioned for riding round that castle, which you know is my rightful inheritance; or excluded from the sight of a parent who suffers under your tyranny and oppression. It is my part, therefore, to expostulate; and, since fortune hath favoured me with an opportunity of revenging our wrongs in person, we shall not part until you have learned that the family of the Count de Melvil is not to be injured with impunity. Here is no advantage on either side, in point of arms or number; you are better mounted than I am, and shall have the choice of the ground on which our difference ought to be brought to a speedy determination."

Trebasi, whose courage was not of the sentimental kind, but purely owing to his natural insensibility of danger, instead of concerting measures coolly for the engagement, or making any verbal reply to this defiance, drew a pistol, without the least hesitation, and fired it at the face of Renaldo, part of whose left eyebrow was carried off by the ball. Melvil was not slow in returning the compliment, which, as it was deliberate, proved the more decisive. For the shot entering the Count's right breast, made its way to the

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backbone with such a shock, as struck him to the ground; upon which the other alighted, in order to improve the advantage he had gained.

During this transaction, Farrel had well-nigh lost his life by the savage behaviour of Trebasi's attendant, who had been a hussar officer, and who, thinking it was his duty to imitate the example of his patron on this occasion, discharged a pistol at the Major, before he had the least intimation of his design. The Hibernian's horse being a common hireling, and unaccustomed to stand fire, no sooner saw the flash of Trebasi's pistol, than, starting aside, he happened to plunge into a hole, and was overturned at the very instant when the hussar's piece went off, so that no damage ensued to his rider, who, pitching on his feet, flew with great nimbleness to his adversary, then, laying hold on one leg, dismounted him in a twinkling, and, seizing his throat as he lay, would have soon despatched him without the use of firearms, had he not been prevented by his friend Renaldo, who desired him to desist, observing that his vengeance was already satisfied, as the Count seemed to be in the agonies of death. The Major was loth to quit his prey, as he thought his aggressor had acted in a treacherous manner; but recollecting that there was no time to lose, because, in all probability, the firing had alarmed the castle, he took his leave of the vanquished hussar, with a couple of hearty kicks, and, mounting his horse, followed Melvil to the house of a gentleman in the neighbourhood, who was kinsman to the Countess, and very well disposed to grant him a secure retreat, until the

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troublesome consequences of this rencontre should be overblown.

Trebasi, though to the young gentleman he seemed speechless and insensible, had neither lost the use of his reason nor of his tongue, but affected that extremity, in order to avoid any further conversation with the victor. He was one of those people who never think of death until he knocks at the door, and then earnestly entreat him to excuse them for the present, and be so good as to call another time. The Count had so often escaped unhurt, in the course of his campaigns, that he looked upon himself as invulnerable, and set all danger at defiance. Though he had hitherto taken no care of the concerns of his soul, he had a large fund of superstition at bottom; and, when the surgeon, who examined his wound, declared it was mortal, all the terrors of futurity took hold on his imagination, all the misdemeanours of his life presented themselves in aggravated colours to his recollection.

He implored the spiritual assistance of a good priest in the neighbourhood, who, in the discharge of his own conscience, gave him to understand that he had little mercy to expect, unless he would, as much as lay in his power, redress the injuries he had done to his fellow-creatures. As nothing lay heavier upon his soul than the cruelty and fraud he had practised upon the family of Count Melvil, he earnestly besought this charitable clergyman to mediate his pardon with the Countess, and at the same time desired to see Renaldo before his death, that he might put him in possession of his paternal estate, and solicit his forgiveness for the offence he had given.

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His lady, far from waiting for the priest's intercession, no sooner understood the lamentable situation of her husband, and found herself at liberty, than she hastened to his apartment, expressed the utmost concern for his misfortune, and tended him with truly conjugal tenderness and fidelity. Her son gladly obeyed the summons, and was received with great civility and satisfaction by his father-in-law, who, in presence of the judge and divers gentlemen assembled for that purpose, renounced all right and title to the fortune he had so unjustly usurped; disclosed the name of the convent to which Mademoiselle de Melvil had been conveyed, dismissed all the agents of his iniquity, and being reconciled to his son-in-law, began to prepare himself in tranquillity for his latter end.

The Countess was overwhelmed with an excess of joy, while she embraced her long-lost son, who had proved himself so worthy of his father. Yet this joy was embittered, by reflecting that she was made a widow by the hands of that darling son. For, though she knew his honour demanded the sacrifice, she could not lay aside that regard and veneration which is attached to the name of husband; and therefore resolved to retire into a monastery, where she could spend the remainder of her life in devotion, without being exposed to any intercourse which might interfere with the delicacy of her sentiments on that subject.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE

HE IS THE MESSENGER OF HAPPINESS TO HIS SISTER, WHO REMOVES THE FILM WHICH HAD LONG OBSTRUCTED HIS PENETRATION, WITH REGARD TO COUNT FATHOM.

AS the most endearing affection had always subsisted between Renaldo and his sister, he would not one moment deny himself the pleasure of flying to her embrace, and of being the glad messenger of her deliverance. Soon, therefore, as he understood the place of her retreat, and had obtained a proper order to the abbess, signed by Count Trebasi, he set out post for Vienna, still accompanied by his faithful Hibernian, and, arriving at the convent, found the abbess and the whole house so engrossed in making preparations for the ceremony of giving the veil next day to a young woman who had fulfilled the term of her probation, that he could not possibly see his sister with that leisure and satisfaction which he had flattered himself with enjoying at this meeting; and therefore he was fain to bridle his impatience for two days, and keep his credentials until the hurry should be over, that Mademoiselle might have no intimation of her good fortune, except from his own mouth.

In order to fill up this tedious interval, he visited his friends at court, who were rejoiced to hear the

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happy issue of his excursion to Presburg; the prince, who was his particular patron, desired he would make himself perfectly easy with regard to the death of Count Trebasi, for he would take care to represent him in such a light to the empress-queen, as would screen him from any danger or prosecution on that account. His highness, moreover, appointed the following day for performing the promise he had made of presenting him to that august princess, and in the meantime prepossessed her so much in his favour, that when he approached her presence, and was announced by his noble introductor, she eyed him with a look of peculiar complacency, saying, "I am glad to see you returned to my dominions. Your father was a gallant officer, who served our house with equal courage and fidelity; and as I understand you tread in his footsteps, you may depend upon my favour and protection."

He was so much overwhelmed with this gracious reception, that, while he bowed in silence, the drops of gratitude trickled from his eyes; and her imperial majesty was so well pleased with this manifestation of his heart, that she immediately gave directions for promoting him to the command of a troop of horse. Thus fortune seemed willing, and indeed eager to discharge the debt she owed him for the different calamities he had undergone. And as he looked upon the generous Hebrew to be the sole source of his success, he did not fail to make him acquainted with the happy effects of his recommendation and friendship, and to express, in the warmest terms, the deep sense he had of his uncom-

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mon benevolence, which, by the bye, was still greater, with regard to Renaldo, than the reader as yet imagines; for he not only furnished him with money for his present occasions, but also gave him an unlimited credit on a banker in Vienna, to whom one of his letters was directed.

The ceremony of the nun's admission being now performed, and the convent restored to its former quiet, Melvil hastened thither on the wings of brotherly affection, and presented his letter to the abbess, who having perused the contents, by which she learned that the family disquiets of Count Trebasi no longer subsisted, and that the bearer was the brother of Mademoiselle, she received him with great politeness, congratulated him on this happy event, and, begging he would excuse her staying with him in the parlour, on pretence of business, withdrew, saying, she would immediately send in a young lady who would console him for her absence. In a few minutes he was joined by his sister, who, expecting nothing less than to see Renaldo, no sooner distinguished his features, than she shrieked aloud with surprise, and would have sunk upon the floor, had not he supported her in his embrace.

Such a sudden apparition of her brother at any time, or in any place, after their long separation, would have strongly affected this sensible young lady; but to find him so abruptly in a place where she thought herself buried from the knowledge of all her relations, occasioned such commotions in her spirits as had well-nigh endangered her reason. For it was not till after a considerable pause, that she

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could talk to him with connexion or coherence. However, as those transports subsided, they entered into a more deliberate and agreeable conversation; in the course of which, he gradually informed her of what had passed at the castle; and inexpressible was the pleasure she felt in learning that her mother was released from captivity, herself restored to freedom, and her brother to the possession of his inheritance, by the only means to which she had always prayed these blessings might be owing.

As she had been treated with uncommon humanity by the abbess, she would not consent to leave the convent until he should be ready to set out for Presburg; so that they dined together with that good lady, and passed the afternoon in that mutual communication with which a brother and sister may be supposed to entertain themselves on such an occasion. She gave him a detail of the insults and mortifications she had suffered from the brutality of her father-in-law, and told him, that her confinement in this monastery was owing to Trebasi having intercepted a letter to her from Renaldo, signifying his intention to return to the empire, in order to assert his own right, and redress his grievances. Then turning the discourse upon the incidents of his peregrinations, she in a particular manner inquired about that exquisite beauty who had been the innocent source of all his distresses, and upon whose perfections he had often, in his letters to his sister, expatiated with indications of rapture and delight.

This inquiry in a moment blew up that scorching flame which had been well-nigh stifled by other

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necessary avocations. His eyes gleamed, his cheeks glowed and grew pale alternately, and his whole frame underwent an immediate agitation; which being perceived by Mademoiselle, she concluded that some new calamity was annexed to the name of Monimia, and, dreading to rip up a wound which she saw was so ineffectually closed, she for the present suppressed her curiosity and concern, and industriously endeavoured to introduce some less affecting subject of conversation. He saw her aim, approved of her discretion, and, joining her endeavours, expressed his surprise at her having omitted to signify the least remembrance of her old favourite, Fathom, whom he had left in England. He had no sooner pronounced this name, than she suffered some confusion in her turn; from which, however, recollecting herself, "Brother," said she, "you must endeavour to forget that wretch, who is altogether unworthy of retaining the smallest share of your regard."

Astonished, and indeed angry, at this expression, which he considered as the effect of malicious misrepresentation, he gently chid her for her credulity in believing the envious aspersion of some person, who repined at the superior virtue of Fathom, whom he affirmed to be an honour to the human species.

"Nothing is more easy," replied the young lady, "than to impose upon a person, who, being himself unconscious of guile, suspects no deceit. You have been a dupe, dear brother, not to the finesse of Fathom, but to the sincerity of your own heart. For my own part, I assume no honour to my own

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penetration in having comprehended the villany of that impostor, which was discovered, in more than one instance, by accidents I could not possibly foresee.

"You must know, that Teresa, who attended me from my childhood, and in whose honesty I reposed such confidence, having disobliged some of the inferior servants, was so narrowly watched in all her transactions, as to be at last detected in the very act of conveying a piece of plate, which was actually found concealed among her clothes.

"You may guess how much I was astonished when I understood this circumstance. I could not trust to the evidence of my own senses, and should have still believed her innocent, in spite of ocular demonstration, had not she, in the terrors of being tried for felony, promised to make a very material discovery to the Countess, provided she would take such measures as would save her life.

"This request being complied with, she, in my hearing, opened up such an amazing scene of iniquity, baseness, and ingratitude, which had been acted by her and Fathom, in order to defraud the family to which they were so much indebted, that I could not have believed the human mind capable of such degeneracy, or that traitor endowed with such pernicious cunning and dissimulation, had not her tale been congruous, consistent, and distinct, and fraught with circumstances that left no room to doubt the least article of her confession; on consideration of which she was permitted to go into voluntary exile."

She then explained their combination in all the

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particulars, as we have already recounted them in their proper place, and finally observed, that the opinion she had hence conceived of Fathom's character, was confirmed by what she had since learned of his perfidious conduct towards that very nun who had lately taken the veil.

Perceiving her brother struck dumb with astonishment, and gaping with the most eager attention, she proceeded to relate the incidents of his double intrigue with the jeweller's wife and daughter, as they were communicated to her by the nun, who was no other than the individual Wilhelmina. After those rivals had been forsaken by their gallant, their mutual animosities and chagrin served to whet the attention and invention of each; so that in a little time the whole mystery stood disclosed to both. The mother had discovered the daughter's correspondence with Fathom, as we have formerly observed, by means of that unfortunate letter which he unwittingly committed to the charge of the old beldame; and, as soon as she understood he was without the reach of all solicitation or prosecution, imparted this billet to her husband, whose fury was so ungovernable, that he had almost sacrificed Wilhelmina with his own hands, especially when, terrified by his threats and imprecations, she owned that she had bestowed the chain on this perfidious lover. However, this dreadful purpose was prevented, partly by the interposition of his wife, whose aim was not the death but immurement of his daughter, and partly by the tears and supplication of the young gentlewoman herself, who protested, that, although

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the ceremony of the church had not been performed, she was contracted to Fathom by the most solemn vows, to witness which he invoked all the saints in heaven.

The jeweller, upon cooler consideration, was unwilling to lose the last spark of hope that glittered among the ruins of his despair, and resisted all the importunities of his wife, who pressed him to consult the welfare of his daughter's soul, in the fond expectation of finding some expedient to lure back the chain and its possessor. In the meantime Wilhelmina was daily and hourly exposed to the mortifying animadversions of her mamma, who, with all the insolence of virtue, incessantly upbraided her with the backslidings of her vicious life, and exhorted her to reformation and repentance. This continual triumph lasted for many months, till at length, a quarrel happening between the mother and the gossip at whose house she used to give the rendezvous to her admirers, that incensed confidante, in the precipitation of her anger, promulgated the history of those secret meetings; and, among the rest, her interviews with Fathom were brought to light.

The first people who hear news of this sort are generally those to whom they are most unwelcome. The German was soon apprised of his wife's frailty, and considered the two females of his house as a couple of devils incarnate, sent from hell to exercise his patience. Yet, in the midst of his displeasure, he found matter of consolation, in being furnished with a sufficient reason for parting with his helpmate, who had for many years kept his family in disquiet. He

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therefore, without hazarding a personal conference, sent proposals to her by a friend, which she did not think proper to reject; and seeing himself restored to the dominion of his own house, exerted his sway so tyrannically, that Wilhelmina became weary of her life, and had recourse to the comforts of religion, of which she soon became enamoured, and begged her father's permission to dedicate the rest of her life to the duties of devotion. She was accordingly received in this convent, the regulations of which were so much to her liking, that she performed the task of probation with pleasure, and voluntarily excluded herself from the vanities of this life. It was here she had contracted an acquaintance with Mademoiselle de Melvil, to whom she communicated her complaints of Fathom, on the supposition that he was related to the Count, as he himself had often declared.

While the young lady rehearsed the particulars of this detail, Renaldo sustained a strange vicissitude of different passions. Surprise, sorrow, fear, hope, and indignation raised a most tumultuous conflict in his bosom. Monimia rushed upon his imagination in the character of innocence betrayed by the insinuations of treachery. He with horror viewed her at the mercy of a villain, who had broken all the ties of gratitude and honour.

Affrighted at the prospect, he started from his seat, exclaiming, in the most unconnected strain of distraction and despair, "Have I then nourished a serpent in my bosom! Have I listened to the voice of a traitor, who hath murdered my peace! who

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hath torn my heart-strings asunder, and perhaps ruined the pattern of all earthly perfection. It cannot be. Heaven would not suffer such infernal artifice to take effect. The thunder would be levelled against the head of the accursed projector."

From this transport, compared with his agitation when he mentioned Monimia, his sister judged that Fathom had been the occasion of a breach between the two lovers; and this conjecture being confirmed by the disjointed answers he made to her interrogations upon the affair, she endeavoured to calm his apprehensions, by representing that he would soon have an opportunity of returning to England, where the misunderstanding might be easily cleared up; and that, in the meantime, he had nothing to fear on account of the person of his mistress, in a country where individuals were so well protected by the laws and constitution of the realm. At length he suffered himself to be flattered with the fond hope of seeing Monimia's character triumph in the inquiry, of retrieving that lost jewel, and of renewing that ravishing intercourse and exalted expectation which had been so cruelly cut off. He now wished to find Fathom as black as he had been exhibited, that Monimia's apostasy might be numbered among the misrepresentations of his treachery and fraud.

His love, which was alike generous and ardent, espoused the cause, and he no longer doubted her constancy and virtue. But when he reflected how her tender heart must have been wrung with anguish at his unkindness and cruelty, in leaving her destitute in a foreign land; how her sensibility must have

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been tortured in finding herself altogether dependent upon a ruffian, who certainly harboured the most baleful designs upon her honour; how her life must be endangered both by his barbarity and her own despair — I say, when he reflected on these circumstances, he shuddered with horror and dismay; and that very night despatched a letter to his friend the Jew, entreating him, in the most pressing manner, to employ all his intelligence in learning the situation of the fair orphan, that she might be protected from the villany of Fathom, until his return to England.

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CHAPTER SIXTY

HE RECOMPENSES THE ATTACHMENT OF HIS FRIEND; AND RECEIVES A LETTER THAT REDUCES HIM TO THE VERGE OF DEATH AND DISTRACTION.

THIS step being taken, his mind in some measure retrieved its former tranquillity. He soothed himself with the prospect of a happy reconciliation with the divine Monimia, and his fancy was decoyed from every disagreeable presage by the entertaining conversation of his sister, with whom in two days he set out for Presburg, attended by his friend the Major, who had never quitted him since their meeting at Brussels. Here they found Count Trebasi entirely rid of the fever which had been occasioned by his wound, and in a fair way of doing well; a circumstance that afforded unspeakable pleasure to Melvil, whose manner of thinking was such, as would have made him unhappy, could he have charged himself with the death of his mother's husband, howsoever criminal he might have been.

The Count's ferocity did not return with his health. His eyes were opened by the danger he had incurred, and his sentiments turned in a new channel. He heartily asked pardon of Mademoiselle for the rigorous usage she had suffered from the violence

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of his temper; thanked Renaldo for the seasonable lesson he had administered to him; and not only insisted upon being removed from the castle to a house of his own in Presburg, but proffered to make immediate restitution of all the rents which he had unjustly converted to his own use.

These things being settled in the most amicable manner, to the entire satisfaction of the parties concerned, as well as of the neighbouring noblesse, among whom the house of Melvil was in universal esteem, Renaldo resolved to solicit leave at the Imperial court to return to England, in order to investigate that affair of Monimia, which was more interesting than all the points he had hitherto adjusted. But, before he quitted Presburg, his friend Farrel taking him aside one day, "Count," said he, "will you give me leave to ask, if, by my zeal and attachment for you, I have had the good fortune to acquire your esteem?" "To doubt that esteem," replied Renaldo, "were to suspect my gratitude and honour, of which I must be utterly destitute before I lose the sense of those obligations I owe to your gallantry and friendship — obligations which I long for a proper occasion to repay."

"Well then," resumed the Major, "I will deal with you like a downright Swiss, and point out a method by which you may shift the load of obligation from your own shoulders to mine. You know my birth, rank, and expectations in the service; but perhaps you do not know, that, as my expense has always unavoidably exceeded my income, I find myself a little out at elbows in my circumstances, and

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want to piece them up by matrimony. Of those ladies with whom I think I have any chance of succeeding, Mademoiselle de Melvil seems the best qualified to render my situation happy in all respects. Her fortune is more than sufficient to disembarrass my affairs; her good sense will be a seasonable check upon my vivacity; her agreeable accomplishments will engage a continuation of affection and regard. I know my own disposition well enough to think I shall become a most dutiful and tractable husband; and shall deem myself highly honoured in being more closely united to my dear Count de Melvil, the son and representative of that worthy officer under whom my youth was formed. If you will therefore sanction my claim, I will forthwith begin my approaches, and doubt not, under your auspices, to bring the place to a capitulation."

Renaldo was pleased with the frankness of this declaration, approved of his demand, and desired him to depend upon his good offices with his sister, whom he sounded that same evening upon the subject, recommending the Major to her favour, as a gentleman well worthy of her choice. Mademoiselle, who had never been exercised in the coquetries of her sex, and was now arrived at those years when the vanity of youth ought to yield to discretion, considered the proposal as a philosopher, and after due deliberation candidly owned she had no objection to the match. Farrel was accordingly introduced in the character of a lover, after the permission of the Countess had been obtained; and he carried on his addresses in the usual form, so much to the satis-

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faction of all concerned in the event, that a day was appointed for the celebration of his nuptials, when he entered into peaceable possession of his prize.

A few days after this joyful occasion, while Renaldo was at Vienna, where he had been indulged with leave of absence for six months, and employed in making preparations for his journey to Britain, he was one evening presented by his servant with a package from London, which he no sooner opened, than he found enclosed a letter directed to him, in the handwriting of Monimia. He was so much affected at sight of those well-known characters, that he stood motionless as a statue, eager to know the contents, yet afraid to peruse the billet. While he hesitated in this suspense, he chanced to cast his eye on the inside of the cover, and perceived the name of his Jewish friend at the bottom of a few lines, importing, that the enclosed was delivered to him by a physician of his acquaintance, who had recommended it in a particular manner to his care. This intimation served only to increase the mystery, and whet his impatience; and as he had the explanation in his hand, he summoned all his resolution to his aid, and, breaking the seal, began to read these words: "Renaldo will not suppose that this address proceeds from interested motives, when he learns, that, before it can be presented to his view, the unfortunate Monimia will be no more."

Here the light forsook Renaldo's eyes, his knees knocked together, and he fell at full length insensible on the floor. His valet, hearing the noise, ran into the apartment, lifted him upon a couch, and de-

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spatched a messenger for proper assistance, while he himself endeavoured to recall his spirits by such applications as chance afforded. But before the Count exhibited any signs of life, his brother-in-law entered his chamber by accident, and as soon as he recollected himself from the extreme confusion and concern produced by this melancholy spectacle, he perceived the fatal epistle, which Melvil, though insensible, still kept within his grasp; justly suspecting this to be the cause of that severe paroxysm, he drew near the couch, and with difficulty read what is above rehearsed, and the sequel, to this effect:—

"Yes, I have taken such measures as will prevent it from falling into your hands, until after I shall have been released from a being embittered with inexpressible misery and anguish. It is not my intention, once loved, and ah! still too fondly remembered youth, to upbraid you as the source of that unceasing woe which hath been so long the sole inhabitant of my lonely bosom. I will not call you inconstant or unkind. I dare not think you base or dishonourable; yet I was abruptly sacrificed to a triumphant rival, before I had learned to bear such mortification; before I had overcome the prejudices which I had imbibed in my father's house. I was all at once abandoned to despair, to indigence, and distress, to the vile practices of a villain, who, I fear, hath betrayed us both. What have not I suffered from the insults and vicious designs of that wretch, whom you cherished in your bosom! Yet to these I owe this near approach to that goal of peace, where the canker-worm of sorrow will expire. Beware of

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that artful traitor; and, oh! endeavour to overcome that levity of disposition, which, if indulged, will not only stain your reputation, but also debauch the good qualities of your heart. I release you, in the sight of Heaven, from all obligations. If I have been injured, let not my wrongs be visited on the head of Renaldo, for whom shall be offered up the last fervent prayers of the hapless Monimia."

This letter was a clue to the labyrinth of Melvil's distress. Though the Major had never heard him mention the name of this beauty, he had received such hints from his own wife, as enabled him to comprehend the whole of the Count's disaster. By the administration of stimulating medicines, Renaldo recovered his perception; but this was a cruel alternative, considering the situation of his thoughts. The first word he pronounced was Monimia, with all the emphasis of the most violent despair. He perused the letter, and poured forth incoherent execrations against Fathom and himself. He exclaimed, in a frantic tone, "She is lost for ever! murdered by my unkindness! We are both undone by the infernal arts of Fathom! execrable monster! Restore her to my arms. If thou art not a fiend in reality, I will tear out thy false heart."

So saying, he sprung upon his valet, who would have fallen a sacrifice to his undistinguishing fury, had not he been saved by the interposition of Farrel and the family, who disengaged him from his master's gripe by dint of force; yet, notwithstanding their joint endeavours, he broke from this restraint, leaped upon the floor, and seizing his sword, attempted

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to plunge it in his own breast. When he was once more overcome by numbers, he cursed himself, and all those who withheld him; swore he would not survive the fair victim who had perished by his credulity and indiscretion; and the agitation of his spirits increased to such a degree, that he was seized with strong convulsions, which nature was scarce able to sustain. Every medical expedient was used to quiet his perturbation, which at length yielded so far as to subside into a continual fever and confirmed delirium, during which he ceased not to pour forth the most pathetic complaints, touching his ruined love, and to rave about the ill-starred Monimia. The Major, half distracted by the calamity of his friend, would have concealed it from the knowledge of his family, had not the physician, by despairing of his life, laid him under the necessity of making them acquainted with his condition.

The Countess and Mrs. Farrel were no sooner informed of his case than they hastened to the melancholy scene, where they found Renaldo deprived of his senses, panting under the rage of an exasperated disease. They saw his face distorted, and his eyes glaring with frenzy; they heard him invoke the name of Monimia with a tenderness of accent which even the impulse of madness could not destroy. Then, with a sudden transition of tone and gesture, he denounced vengeance against her betrayer, and called upon the north wind to cool the fervour of his brain. His hair hung in dishevelled parcels, his cheeks were wan, his looks ghastly, his vigour was fled, and all the glory of his youth faded; the

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physician hung his head in silence, the attendants wrung their hands in despair, and the countenance of his friend was bathed in tears.

Such a picture would have moved the most obdurate heart; what impression then must it have made upon a parent and sister, melting with all the enthusiasm of affection! The mother was struck dumb, and stupefied with grief; the sister threw herself on the bed in a transport of sorrow, caught her loved Renaldo in her arms, and was, with great difficulty, torn from his embrace. Such was the dismal reverse that overtook the late so happy family of Melvil; such was the extremity to which the treachery of Fathom had reduced his best benefactor!

Three days did nature struggle with surprising efforts, and then the constitution seemed to sink under the victorious fever; yet, as his strength diminished, his delirium abated, and on the fifth morning he looked round, and recognised his weeping friends. Though now exhausted to the lowest ebb of life, he retained the perfect use of speech, and his reason being quite unclouded, spoke to each with equal kindness and composure; he congratulated himself upon the sight of shore after the horrors of such a tempest; called upon the Countess and his sister, who were not permitted to see him at such a conjuncture; and being apprised by the Major of his reason for excluding them from his presence, he applauded his concern, bequeathed them to his future care, and took leave of that gentleman with a cordial embrace. Then he desired to be left in private with a certain clergyman, who regulated the concerns of his soul,

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and he being dismissed, turned his face from the light, in expectation of his final discharge. In a few minutes all was still and dreary, he was no longer heard to breathe, no more the stream of life was perceived to circulate, he was supposed to be absolved from all his cares, and an universal groan from the bystanders announced the decease of the gallant, generous, and tender-hearted Renaldo.

"Come hither, ye whom the pride of youth and health, of birth and affluence inflames, who tread the flowery maze of pleasure, trusting to the fruition of ever-circling joys; ye who glory in your accomplishments, who indulge the views of ambition, and lay schemes for future happiness and grandeur, contemplate here the vanity of life! behold how low this excellent young man is laid! mowed down even in the blossom of his youth, when fortune seemed to open all her treasures to his worth!"

Such were the reflections of the generous Farrel, who, while he performed the last office of friendship, in closing the eyes of the much-lamented Melvil, perceived a warmth on the skin, which the hand of death seldom leaves unextinguished. This uncommon sensation he reported to the physician, who, though he could feel no pulsation of the heart or arteries, conjectured that life still lingered in some of its interior haunts, and immediately ordered such applications to the extremities and surface of the body, as might help to concentrate and reinforce the natural heat.

By these prescriptions, which for some time produced no sensible effect, the embers were, in all

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probability, kept glowing, and the vital power revived, for, after a considerable pause, respiration was gradually renewed at long intervals, a languid motion was perceived at the heart, a few feeble and irregular pulsations were felt at the wrist, the clay-coloured livery of death began to vanish from his face, the circulation acquired new force, and he opened his eyes with a sigh, which proclaimed his return from the shades of death.

When he recovered the faculty of swallowing, a cordial was administered, and whether the fever abated, in consequence of the blood's being cooled and condensed during the recess of action in the solids, or nature, in that agony, had prepared a proper channel for the expulsion of the disease, certain it is, he was from this moment rid of all bodily pain; he retrieved the animal functions, and nothing remained of his malady but an extreme weakness and languor, the effect of nature's being fatigued in the battle she had won.

Unutterable was the joy that took possession of his mother and sister when Farrel flew into her apartment to intimate this happy turn. Scarce could they be restrained from pouring forth their transports in the presence of Renaldo, who was still too feeble to endure such communication; indeed, he was extremely mortified and dejected at this event, which had diffused such pleasure and satisfaction among his friends, for though his distemper was mastered, the fatal cause of it still rankled at his heart, and he considered this respite from death as a protraction of his misery.

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When he was congratulated by the Major on the triumph of his constitution, he replied, with a groan, "I would to heaven it had been otherwise, for I am reserved for all the horrors of the most poignant sorrow and remorse. O Monimia! Monimia! I hoped by this time to have convinced thy gentle shade, that I was, at least intentionally, innocent of that ruthless barbarity which hath brought thee to an untimely grave. Heaven and earth! do I still survive the consciousness of that dire catastrophe! and lives the atrocious villain who hath blasted all our hopes!"

With these last words the fire darted from his eyes, and his brother, snatching this occasional handle for reconciling him to life, joined in his exclamations against the treacherous Fathom, and observed, that he should not, in point of honour, wish to die, until he should have sacrificed that traitor to the manes of the beauteous Monimia. This incitement acted as a spur upon exhausted nature, causing the blood to circulate with fresh vigour, and encouraging him to take such sustenance as would recruit his strength, and repair the damage which his health had sustained.

His sister assiduously attended him in his recovery, flattering his appetite, and amusing his sorrow at the same time; the clergyman assailed his despondence with religious weapons, as well as with arguments drawn from philosophy; and the fury of his passions being already expended, he became so tractable as to listen to his remonstrances. But notwithstanding the joint endeavours of all his friends, a deep fixed melancholy remained after every consequence of

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his disease had vanished. In vain they essayed to elude his grief by gaiety and diversions, in vain they tried to decoy his heart into some new engagement.

These kind attempts served only to feed and nourish that melancholy which pined within his bosom. Monimia still haunted him in the midst of these amusements, while his reflection whispered to him, "Pleasures like these I might have relished with her participation." That darling idea mingled in all the female assemblies at which he was present, eclipsing their attractions, and enhancing the bitterness of his loss; for absence, enthusiasm, and even his despair had heightened the charms of the fair orphan into something supernatural and divine.

Time, that commonly weakens the traces of remembrance, seemed to deepen its impressions in his breast; nightly, in his dreams, did he converse with his dear Monimia, sometimes on the verdant bank of a delightful stream, where he breathed, in soft murmurs, the dictates of his love and admiration; sometimes reclined within the tufted grove, his arm encircled and sustained her snowy neck, whilst she, with looks of love ineffable, gazed on his face, invoking Heaven to bless her husband and her lord. Yet, even in these illusions was his fancy oft alarmed for the ill-fated fair. Sometimes he viewed her tottering on the brink of a steep precipice, far distant from his helping hand; at other times she seemed to sail along the boisterous tide, imploring his assistance, then would he start with horror from his sleep, and feel his sorrows more than realised; he deserted his couch, he avoided the society of mankind, he courted

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sequestered shades where he could indulge his melancholy; there his mind brooded over his calamity until his imagination became familiar with all the ravages of death; it contemplated the gradual decline of Monimia's health, her tears, her distress, her despair at his imagined cruelty; he saw, through that perspective, every blossom of her beauty wither, every sparkle vanish from her eyes; he beheld her faded lips, her pale cheek, and her inanimated features, the symmetry of which not death itself was able to destroy. His fancy conveyed her breathless corse to the cold grave, o'er which, perhaps, no tear humane was shed, where her delicate limbs were consigned to dust, where she was dished out a delicious banquet to the unsparing worm.

Over these pictures he dwelt with a sort of pleasing anguish, until he became so enamoured of her tomb, that he could no longer resist the desire that compelled him to make a pilgrimage to the dear hallowed spot, where all his once gay hopes lay buried; that he might nightly visit the silent habitation of his ruined love, embrace the sacred earth with which she was now compounded, moisten it with his tears, and bid the turf lie easy on her breast. Besides the prospect of this gloomy enjoyment, he was urged to return to England, by an eager desire of taking vengeance on the perfidious Fathom, as well as of acquitting himself of the obligations he owed in that kingdom, to those who had assisted him in his distress. He therefore communicated his intention to Farrel, who would have insisted upon attending him in the journey, had not he been conjured to stay and

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manage Renaldo's affairs in his absence. Every previous step being taken, he took leave of the Countess and his sister, who had, with all their interest and elocution, opposed his design, the execution of which, they justly feared, would, instead of dissipating, augment his chagrin; and now, seeing him determined, they shed a flood of tears at his departure, and he set out from Vienna in a post-chaise, accompanied by a trusty valet-de-chambre on horseback.

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CHAPTER SIXTY-ONE

RENALDO MEETS WITH A LIVING MONUMENT OF JUSTICE, AND ENCOUNTERS A PERSONAGE OF SOME NOTE IN THESE MEMOIRS.

AS this domestic was very well qualified for making all the proper dispositions, and adjusting every necessary article on the road, Renaldo totally abstracted himself from earthly considerations, and mused without ceasing on that theme which was the constant subject of his contemplation. He was blind to the objects that surrounded him; he scarce ever felt the importunities of nature; and had not they been reinforced by the pressing entreaties of his attendant, he would have proceeded without refreshment or repose. In this absence of mind did he traverse a great part of Germany, in his way to the Austrian Netherlands, and arrived at the fortress of Luxemburg, where he was obliged to tarry a whole day on account of an accident which had happened to his chaise. Here he went to view the fortifications; and as he walked along the ramparts, his ears were saluted with these words: "Heaven bless the noble Count de Melvil! will not he turn the eyes of compassion on an old fellow-soldier reduced to misfortune and disgrace?"

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Surprised at this address, which was attended with the clanking of chains, Renaldo lifted up his eyes, and perceived the person who spoke to be one of two malefactors shackled together, who had been sentenced for some crime to work as labourers on the fortifications. His face was so covered with hair, and his whole appearance so disguised by the squalid habit which he wore, that the Count could not recollect his features, until he gave him to understand that his name was Ratchcali. Melvil immediately recognised his fellow-student at Vienna, and his brother-volunteer upon the Rhine, and expressed equal surprise and concern at seeing him in such a deplorable situation.

Nothing renders the soul so callous and insensible as the searing brands of infamy and disgrace. Without betraying the least symptoms of shame or confusion, "Count," says he, "this is the fate of war, at least of the war in which I have been engaged, ever since I took leave of the Imperial army, and retreated with your old companion Fathom. Long life to that original genius! If he is not unhappily eclipsed by some unfortunate interposition, before his terrene parts are purified, I foresee that he will shine a star of the first magnitude in the world of adventure."

At mention of this detested name, Renaldo's heart began to throb with indignation; yet he suppressed the emotion, and desired to know the meaning of that splendid encomium which he had bestowed upon his confederate. "It would be quite unnecessary," replied Ratchcali, "for a man in my present situation to equivocate or disguise the truth. The

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nature of my disgrace is perfectly well known. I am condemned to hard labour for life; and unless some lucky accident, which I cannot now foresee, shall intervene, all I can expect is some alleviation of my hard lot from the generosity of such gentlemen as you, who compassionate the sufferings of your fellow-creatures. In order to engage your benevolence the more in my behalf, I shall, if you will give me the hearing, faithfully inform you of some particulars, which it may import you to know, concerning my old acquaintance Ferdinand Count Fathom, whose real character hath perhaps hitherto escaped your notice."

Then he proceeded to give a regular detail of all the strokes of finesse which he, in conjunction with our adventurer, had practised upon Melvil and others, during their residence at Vienna, and the campaigns they had made upon the Rhine. He explained the nature of the robbery which was supposed to have been done by the Count's valet, together with the manner of their desertion. He described his separation from Fathom, their meeting at London, the traffic they carried on in copartnership; and the misfortune that reduced Ferdinand to the condition in which he was found by Melvil.

"After having gratified the honest lawyer," said he, "with a share of the unfortunate Fathom's spoils, and packed up all my own valuable effects, my new auxiliary Maurice and I posted to Harwich, embarked in the packet-boat, and next day arrived at Helvoetsluys; from thence we repaired to the Hague, in order to mingle in the gaieties of the

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place, and exercise our talents at play, which is there cultivated with universal eagerness. But, chancing to meet with an old acquaintance, whom I did not at all desire to see, I found it convenient to withdraw softly to Rotterdam; from whence we set out for Antwerp; and, having made a tour of the Austrian Netherlands, set up our rest at Brussels, and concerted a plan for laying the Flemings under contribution.

"From our appearance we procured admission into the most polite assemblies, and succeeded to a wonder in all our operations; until our career was unfortunately checked by the indiscretion of my ally, who, being detected in the very act of conveying a card, was immediately introduced to a magistrate. And this minister of justice was so curious, inquisitive, and clear-sighted, that Count Maurice, finding it impossible to elude his penetration, was fain to stipulate for his own safety, by giving up his friend to the cognisance of the law. I was accordingly apprehended, before I knew the cause of my arrest; and being unhappily known by some soldiers of the Prince's guard, my character turned out so little to the approbation of the inquisitors, that all my effects were confiscated for the benefit of the state, and I was by a formal sentence condemned to labour on the fortifications all the days of my life; while Maurice escaped at the expense of five hundred stripes, which he received in public from the hands of the common executioner.

"Thus have I, without evasion or mental reservation, given a faithful account of the steps by which

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I have arrived at this barrier, which is likely to be the *ne plus ultra* of my peregrinations, unless the generous Count de Melvil will deign to interpose his interest in behalf of an old fellow-soldier, who may yet live to justify his mediation."

Renaldo had no reason to doubt the truth of this story, every circumstance of which tended to corroborate the intelligence he had already received touching the character of Fathom, whom he now considered with a double portion of abhorrence, as the most abandoned miscreant that nature had ever produced. Though Ratchcali did not possess a much higher place in his opinion, he favoured him with marks of his bounty, and exhorted him, if possible, to reform his heart; but he would by no means promise to interpose his credit in favour of a wretch self-convicted of such enormous villany and fraud. He could not help moralising upon this rencontre, which inspired him with great contempt for human nature. And next day he proceeded on his journey with a heavy heart, ruminating on the perfidy of mankind, and, between whiles, transported with the prospect of revenging all his calamities upon the accursed author.

While he was wrapped up in these reveries, his carriage rolled along, and had already entered a wood between Mons and Tournay, when his dream was suddenly interrupted by the explosion of several pistols that were fired among the thickets at a little distance from the road. Roused at this alarm, he snatched his sword that stood by him, and springing from the chaise, ran directly towards the spot, being

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close followed by his valet, who had alighted and armed himself with a pistol in each hand. About forty yards from the highway, they arrived in a little glade or opening, where they saw a single man standing at bay against five banditti, after having killed one of their companions, and lost his own horse, that lay dead upon the ground.

Melvil seeing this odds, and immediately guessing their design, rushed among them without hesitation, and in an instant ran his sword through the heart of one whose hand was raised to smite the gentleman behind, while he was engaged with the rest in front. At the same time the valet disabled another by a shot in the shoulder; so that the number being now equal on both sides, a furious combat ensued, every man being paired with an antagonist, and each having recourse to swords, as all their pieces had been discharged. Renaldo's adversary, finding himself pressed with equal fury and skill, retreated gradually among the trees, until he vanished altogether into the thickest of the wood; and his two companions followed his example with great ease, the valet-de-chambre being hurt in the leg, and the stranger so much exhausted by the wounds he had received before Renaldo's interposition, that, when the young gentleman approached to congratulate him on the defeat of the robbers, he, in advancing to embrace his deliverer, dropped down motionless on the grass.

The Count, with that warmth of sympathy and benevolence which was natural to his heart, lifted up the wounded cavalier in his arms, and carried him to the chaise, in which he was deposited, while the

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valet-de-chambre reloaded his pistols, and prepared for a second attack, as they did not doubt that the banditti would return with a reinforcement. However, before they reappeared, Renaldo's driver disengaged him from the wood, and in less than a quarter of an hour they arrived at a village, where they halted for assistance to the stranger, who, though still alive, had not recovered the use of his senses.

After he was undressed, and laid in a warm bed, a surgeon examined his body, and found a wound in his neck by a sword, and another in his right side, occasioned by a pistol-shot; so that his prognostic was very dubious. Meanwhile, he applied proper dressings to both; and, in half an hour after this administration, the gentleman gave some tokens of perception. He looked around him with a wildness of fury in his aspect, as if he had thought himself in the hands of the robbers by whom he had been attacked. But, when he saw the assiduity with which the bystanders exerted themselves in his behalf, one raising his head from the pillow, while another exhorted him to swallow a little wine which was warmed for the purpose; when he beheld the sympathising looks of all present, and heard himself accosted in the most cordial terms by the person whom he recollected as his deliverer, all the severity vanished from his countenance; he took Renaldo's hand, and pressed it to his lips; and, while the tears gushed from his eyes, "Praised be God," said he, "that virtue and generosity are still to be found among the sons of men."

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Everybody in the apartment was affected by this exclamation; and Melvil, above all the rest, felt such emotions as he could scarcely restrain. He entreated the gentleman to believe himself in the midst of such friends as would effectually secure him from all violence and mortification; he conjured him to compose the perturbation of his spirits, and quiet the apprehensions of his mind with that reflection; and protested, that he himself would not quit the house while his attendance should be deemed necessary for the stranger's cure, or his conversation conducive to his amusement.

These assurances, considered with the heroic part which the young Hungarian had already acted in his behalf, inspired the cavalier with such a sublime idea of Melvil, that he gazed upon him with silent astonishment, as an angel sent from heaven for his succour; and, in the transport of his gratitude, could not help exclaiming, "Sure Providence hath still something in reserve for this unfortunate wretch, in whose favour such a miracle of courage and generosity hath interposed!"

Being accommodated with proper care and attendance, his constitution in a little time overcame the fever; and, at the third dressing, the surgeon declared him out of all danger from his wounds. Then was Renaldo indulged with opportunities of conversing with the patient, and of inquiring into the particulars of his fortune and designs in life, with a view to manifest the inclination he felt to serve him in his future occasions.

The more this stranger contemplated the character

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of the Count, the more his amazement increased, on account of his extraordinary benevolence in favour of a person whose merit he could not possibly know; he even expressed his surprise on this subject to Renaldo, who at length told him, that, although his best offices should always be ready for the occasions of any gentleman in distress, his particular attachment and regard to him was improved by an additional consideration. "I am no stranger," said he, "to the virtues and honour of the gallant Don Diego de Zelos."

"Heaven and earth!" cried the stranger, starting from his seat with extreme emotion, "do I then live to hear myself addressed by that long-lost appellation! my heart glows at the expression! my spirits are kindled with a flame that thrills through every nerve! Say, young gentleman, if you are really an inhabitant of earth, by what means are you acquainted with the unhappy name of Zelos?"

In answer to this eager interrogation, Renaldo gave him to understand, that in the course of his travels, he had resided a short time at Seville, where he had frequently seen Don Diego, and often heard his character mentioned with uncommon esteem and veneration. "Alas!" replied the Castilian, "that justice is no longer done to the wretched Zelos; his honours are blasted, and his reputation canker-bitten by the venomous tooth of slander."

He then proceeded to unfold his misfortunes, as they have already been explained in the former part of these memoirs; at the recapitulation of which, the heart of Melvil, being intendered by his own calam-

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ities, was so deeply affected, that he re-echoed the groans of Don Diego, and wept over his sufferings with the most filial sympathy. When he repeated the story of that cruel fraud which was practised upon him by the faithless Fadini, Melvil, whose mind and imagination teemed with the villanies of Fathom, was immediately struck with the conjecture of his being the knave; because, indeed, he could not believe that any other person was so abandoned by principle and humanity as to take such a barbarous advantage of a gentleman in distress.

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CHAPTER SIXTY-TWO

HIS RETURN TO ENGLAND, AND MIDNIGHT PILGRIMAGE TO MONIMIA'S TOMB.

HE considered the date of that unparalleled transaction, which agreed with his conjecture, and from the inquiries he made concerning the person of the traitor, gathered reasons sufficient to confirm his supposition. Thus certified, "That is the villain," cried the Count, "whose infernal arts have overwhelmed me with such misery as Heaven itself hath made no remedy to dispel! To revenge my wrongs on that perfidious miscreant, is one of the chief reasons for which I deign to drag about an hateful being. O Don Diego! what is life, when all its enjoyments are so easily poisoned by the machinations of such a worm!" So saying, he smote his breast in all the agony of woe, and besought the Spaniard to relate the steps he took in consequence of this disaster.

The Castilian's cheeks reddened at this information, which enforced his own resentment, and casting up his eyes to heaven, "Sacred powers!" cried he, "let him not perish, before you bring him within my reach. You ask me, noble cavalier, what measures I took in this abyss of misery? For the first day, I was tortured with apprehensions for the friendly

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Fadini, fearing that he had been robbed and murdered for the jewels which he had, perhaps, too unwarily exposed to sale. But this terror soon vanished before the true presages of my fate, when, on the morrow, I found the whole family in tears and confusion, and heard my landlord pour forth the most bitter imprecations against the fugitive, who had deflowered his daughter, and even robbed the house. You will ask, which of the passions of my heart were interested on this occasion? they were shame and indignation. All my grief flowed in another channel; I blushed to find my judgment deceived; I scorned to complain; but, in my heart, denounced vengeance against my base betrayer. I silently retired to my apartment, in order to commune with my own thoughts.

"I had borne greater calamities without being driven to despair; I summoned all my fortitude to my assistance, and resolved to live in spite of affliction. Thus determined, I betook myself to the house of a general officer, whose character was fair in the world; and having obtained admission in consequence of my Oriental appearance, 'To a man of honour,' said I, 'the unfortunate need no introduction. My habit proclaims me a Persian; this passport from the States of Holland will confirm that supposition. I have been robbed of jewels to a considerable value, by a wretch whom I favoured with my confidence; and now, reduced to extreme indigence, I come to offer myself as a soldier in the armies of France. I have health and strength sufficient to discharge that duty. Nor am I unacquainted with a

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military life, which was once my glory and occupation. I therefore sue for your protection, that I may be received, though in the lowest order of them that serve the King; and that your future favour may depend upon my behaviour in that capacity.'

"The general, surprised at my declaration, surveyed me with uncommon attention; he perused my certificate; asked divers questions concerning the art of war, to which I returned such answers as convinced him that I was not wholly ignorant in that particular. In short, I was enlisted as a volunteer in his own regiment, and soon after promoted to the rank of a subaltern, and the office of equerry to his own son, who, at that time, had attained to the degree of colonel, though his age did not exceed eighteen years.

"This young man was naturally of a ferocious disposition, which had been rendered quite untractable by the pride of birth and fortune, together with the licence of his education. As he did not know the respect due to a gentleman, so he could not possibly pay it to those who were, unfortunately, under his command. Divers mortifications I sustained with that fortitude which became a Castilian who lay under obligations to the father; till, at length, laying aside all decorum, he smote me. Sacred Heaven! he smote Don Diego de Zelos, in presence of his whole household.

"Had my sword been endowed with sensation, it would of itself have started from its scabbard at this indignity offered to its master. I unsheathed it without deliberation, saying, 'Know, insolent boy, he

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is a gentleman whom thou hast outraged; and thou hast thus cancelled the ties which have hitherto restrained my indignation.' His servants would have interposed, but he commanded them to retire; and, flushed with that confidence which the impetuosity of his temper inspired, he drew, in his turn, and attacked me with redoubled rage; but his dexterity being very unequal to his courage, he was soon disarmed, and overthrown; when, pointing my sword to his breast, 'In consideration of thy youth and ignorance,' said I, 'I spare that life which thou hast forfeited by thy ungenerous presumption.'

"With these words, I put up my weapon, retired through the midst of his domestics, who, seeing their master safe, did not think proper to oppose my passage, and, mounting my horse, in less than two hours entered the Austrian dominions, resolving to proceed as far as Holland, that I might embark in the first ship for Spain, in order to wash away, with my own blood, or that of my enemies, the cruel stain which hath so long defiled my reputation.

"This was the grievance that still corroded my heart, and rendered ineffectual the inhuman sacrifice I had made to my injured honour. This was the consideration that incessantly prompted, and still importunes me to run every risk of life and fortune, rather than leave my fame under such an ignominious aspersion. I purpose to obey this internal call. I am apt to believe it is the voice of Heaven — of that Providence which manifested its care by sending such a generous auxiliary to my aid, when I was

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overpowered by banditti, on the very first day of my expedition."

Having in this manner gratified the curiosity of his deliverer, he expressed a desire of knowing the quality of him to whom he was so signally obliged; and Renaldo did not scruple to make the Castilian acquainted with his name and family. He likewise communicated the story of his unfortunate love, with all the symptoms of unutterable woe, which drew tears from the noble-hearted Spaniard, while, with a groan, that announced the load which overwhelmed his soul, "I had a daughter," said he, "such as you describe the peerless Monimia; had Heaven decreed her for the arms of such a lover, I, who am now the most wretched, should have been the most happy parent upon earth."

Thus did these new friends alternately indulge their mutual sorrow, and concert measures for their future operations. Melvil earnestly solicited the Castilian to favour him with his company to England, where, in all probability, both would enjoy the gloomy satisfaction of being revenged upon their common betrayer, Fathom; and, as a farther inducement, he assured him, that, as soon as he should have accomplished the melancholy purposes of his voyage, he would accompany Don Diego to Spain, and employ his whole interest and fortune in his service. The Spaniard, thunderstruck at the extravagant generosity of this proposal, could scarce believe the evidence of his own senses; and, after some pause, replied, "My duty would teach me to obey any command you should think proper to impose; but here my

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inclination and interest are so agreeably flattered, that I should be equally ungrateful and unwise, in pretending to comply with reluctance."

This point being settled, they moved forwards to Mons, as soon as Don Diego was in a condition to bear the shock of such a removal, and there remaining until his wounds were perfectly cured, they hired a post-chaise for Ostend, embarked in a vessel at that port, reached the opposite shore of England, after a short and easy passage, and arrived in London without having met with any sinister accident on the road.

As they approached this capital, Renaldo's grief seemed to regurgitate with redoubled violence. His memory was waked to the most minute and painful exertion of its faculties; his imagination teemed with the most afflicting images, and his impatience became so ardent, that never lover panted more eagerly for the consummation of his wishes, than Melvil, for an opportunity of stretching himself upon the grave of the lost Monimia. The Castilian was astonished, as well as affected, at the poignancy of his grief, which, as a proof of his susceptibility and virtue, endeared him still more to his affection; and though his own misfortunes had rendered him very unfit for the office of a comforter, he endeavoured, by soothing discourse, to moderate the excess of his friend's affliction.

Though it was dark when they alighted at the inn, Melvil ordered a coach to be called; and, being attended by the Spaniard, who would not be persuaded to quit him upon such an occasion, he re-

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paired to the house of the generous Jew, whose rheum distilled very plentifully at his approach. The Count had already acquitted himself in point of pecuniary obligations to this benevolent Hebrew; and now, after having made such acknowledgments as might be expected from a youth of his disposition, he begged to know by what channel he had received that letter which he had been so kind as to forward to Vienna.

Joshua, who was ignorant of the contents of that epistle, and saw the young gentleman extremely moved, would have eluded his inquiry, by pretending he had forgot the circumstance; but when he understood the nature of the case, which was not explained without the manifestation of the utmost inquietude, he heartily condoled the desponding lover, telling him he had in vain employed all his intelligence about that unfortunate beauty, in consequence of Melvil's letter to him on that subject; and then directed him to the house of that physician, who had brought the fatal billet which had made him miserable.

No sooner did he receive this information than he took his leave abruptly, with promise of returning next day, and hied him to the lodgings of that gentleman, whom he was lucky enough to find at home. Being favoured with a private audience, "When I tell you," said he, "that my name is Renaldo Count de Melvil, you will know me to be the most unfortunate of men. By that letter, which you committed to the charge of my worthy friend Joshua, the fatal veil was removed from my eyes, which had

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been so long darkened by the artifices of incredible deceit, and my own incurable misery fully presented to my view. If you were acquainted with the unhappy fair, who hath fallen a victim to my mistake, you will have some idea of the insufferable pangs which I now feel in recollecting her fate. If you have compassion for these pangs, you will not refuse to conduct me to the spot where the dear remains of Monimia are deposited; there let me enjoy a full banquet of woe; there let me feast that worm of sorrow that preys upon my heart. For such entertainment have I revisited this (to me) ill-omened isle; for this satisfaction I intrude upon your condescension at these unseasonable hours; for to such a degree of impatience is my affliction whetted, that no slumber shall assail mine eyelids, no peace reside within my bosom, until I shall have adored that earthly shrine where my Monimia lies! Yet would I know the circumstances of her fate. Did Heaven ordain no angel to minister to her distress? were her last moments comfortless? ha! was not she abandoned to indigence, to insults; left in the power of that inhuman villain who betrayed us both? Sacred Heaven! why did Providence wink at the triumph of such consummate perfidy?"

The physician, having listened with complacency to this effusion, replied, "It is my profession, it is my nature to sympathise with the afflicted. I am a judge of your feelings, because I know the value of your loss. I attended the incomparable Monimia in her last illness, and am well enough acquainted with her story to conclude that she fell a sacrifice to an un-

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happy misunderstanding, effected and fomented by that traitor who abused your mutual confidence."

He then proceeded to inform him of all the particulars which we have already recorded, touching the destiny of the beauteous orphan, and concluded with telling him he was ready to yield him any other satisfaction which it was in his power to grant. The circumstances of the tale had put Renaldo's spirits into such commotion, that he could utter nothing but interjections and unconnected words. When Fathom's behaviour was described, he trembled with fierce agitation, started from his chair, pronouncing, "Monster! fiend! but we shall one day meet."

When he was made acquainted with the benevolence of the French lady, he exclaimed, "O heaven-born charity and compassion! sure that must be some spirit of grace sent hither to mitigate the tortures of life! where shall I find her, to offer up my thanks and adoration?" Having heard the conclusion of the detail, he embraced the relater, as the kind benefactor of Monimia, shed a flood of tears in his bosom, and pressed him to crown the obligation, by conducting him to the solitary place where now she rested from all her cares.

The gentleman perceiving the transports of his grief were such as could not be opposed, complied with his request, attended him in the vehicle, and directed the coachman to drive to a sequestered field, at some distance from the city, where stood the church, within whose awful aisle this scene was to be acted. The sexton being summoned from his bed, produced the keys, in consequence of a gratifica-

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tion, after the physician had communed with him apart, and explained the intention of Renaldo's visit.

During this pause the soul of Melvil was wound up to the highest pitch of enthusiastic sorrow. The uncommon darkness of the night, the solemn silence, and lonely situation of the place, conspired with the occasion of his coming, and the dismal images of his fancy, to produce a real rapture of gloomy expectation, which the whole world would not have persuaded him to disappoint. The clock struck twelve, the owl screeched from the ruined battlement, the door was opened by the sexton, who, by the light of a glimmering taper, conducted the despairing lover to a dreary aisle, and stamped upon the ground with his foot, saying, "Here the young lady lies interred."

Melvil no sooner received this intimation, than falling on his knees, and pressing his lips to the hallowed earth, "Peace," cried he, "to the gentle tenant of this silent habitation." Then turning to the bystanders, with a bloodshot eye, said, "Leave me to the full enjoyment of this occasion; my grief is too delicate to admit the company even of my friends. The rites to be performed require privacy; adieu, then, here must I pass the night alone."

The doctor, alarmed at this declaration, which he was afraid imported some resolution fatal to his own life, began to repent of having been accessory to the visit, attempted to dissuade him from his purpose, and finding him obstinately determined, called in the assistance of the sexton and coachman, and solicited the aid of Don Diego, to force Renaldo from the execution of his design.

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The Castilian knowing his friend was then very unfit for common altercation, interposed in the dispute, saying, "You need not be afraid that he will obey the dictates of despair; his religion, his honour will baffle such temptations; he hath promised to reserve his life for the occasions of his friend; and he shall not be disappointed in his present aim." In order to corroborate this peremptory address, which was delivered in the French language, he unsheathed his sword, and the others retreating at sight of his weapon, "Count," said he, "enjoy your grief in full transport; I will screen you from interruption, though at the hazard of my life; and while you give a loose to sorrow, within the ghastly vault, I will watch till morning in the porch, and meditate upon the ruin of my own family and peace."

He accordingly prevailed upon the physician to retire, after he had satisfied the sexton, and ordered the coachman to return by break of day.

Renaldo, thus left alone, prostrated himself upon the grave, and poured forth such lamentations as would have drawn tears from the most savage hearer. He called aloud upon Monimia's name, "Are these the nuptial joys to which our fate hath doomed us? Is this the fruit of those endearing hopes, that intercourse divine, that raptured admiration, in which so many hours insensibly elapsed? where now are those attractions to which I yielded up my captive heart? quenched are those genial eyes that gladdened each beholder, and shone the planets of my happiness and peace! cold! cold and withered are those lips that swelled with love, and far outblushed the damask

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rose! and ah! for ever silenced is that tongue, whose eloquence had power to lull the pangs of misery and care! no more shall my attention be ravished with the music of that voice, which used to thrill in soft vibrations to my soul! O sainted spirit! O unspotted shade of her whom I adored; of her whose memory I shall still revere with ever-bleeding sorrow and regret; of her whose image will be the last idea that forsakes this hapless bosom! now art thou conscious of my integrity and love; now dost thou behold the anguish that I feel. If the pure essence of thy nature will permit, wilt thou, ah! wilt thou indulge this wretched youth with some kind signal of thy notice, with some token of thy approbation? wilt thou assume a medium of embodied air, in semblance of that lovely form which now lies mouldering in this dreary tomb, and speak the words of peace to my distempered soul! Return, Monimia, appear, though but for one short moment, to my longing eyes! vouchsafe one smile! Renaldo will be satisfied; Renaldo's heart will be at rest; his grief no more will overflow its banks, but glide with equal current to his latest hour! Alas! these are the raving of my delirious sorrow! Monimia hears not my complaints; her soul, sublimed far, far above all sublunary cares, enjoys that felicity of which she was debarred on earth. In vain I stretch these eyes, environed with darkness undistinguishing and void. No object meets my view; no sound salutes mine ear, except the noisy wind that whistles through these vaulted caves of death."

In this kind of exclamation did Renaldo pass the

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night, not without a certain species of woful enjoyment, which the soul is often able to conjure up from the depths of distress; insomuch that, when the morning intruded on his privacy, he could scarce believe it was the light of day, so fast had fleeted the minutes of his devotion.

His heart being thus disburdened, and his impatience gratified, he became so calm and composed, that Don Diego was equally pleased and astonished at the air of serenity with which he came forth, and embraced him with warm acknowledgments of his goodness and attachment. He frankly owned, that his mind was now more at ease than he had ever found it, since he first received the fatal intimation of his loss; that a few such feasts would entirely moderate the keen appetite of his sorrow, which he would afterwards feed with less precipitation.

He also imparted to the Castilian the plan of a monument, which he had designed for the incomparable Monimia; and Don Diego was so much struck with the description, that he solicited his advice in projecting another, of a different nature, to be erected to the memory of his own ill-fated wife and daughter, should he ever be able to re-establish himself in Spain.

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CHAPTER SIXTY-THREE

HE RENEWS THE RITES OF SORROW, AND IS ENTRANCED.

WHILE they amused themselves with this sort of conversation, the physician returned with the coach, and accompanied them back to their inn, where he left them to their repose, after having promised to call again at noon, and conduct Renaldo to the house of Madam Clement, the benefactress of Monimia, to whom he eagerly desired to be introduced.

The appointment was observed with all imaginable punctuality on both sides. Melvil had arrayed himself in a suit of deep mourning, and he found the good lady in the like habit, assumed upon the same occasion. The goodness of her heart was manifest in her countenance; the sensibility of the youth discovered itself in a flood of tears, which he shed at her appearance. His sensations were too full for utterance; nor was she, for some time, able to give him welcome. While she led him by the hand to a seat, the drops of sympathy rushed into either eye; and at length she broke silence, saying, "Count, we must acquiesce in the dispensations of Providence; and quiet the transports of our grief, with a full assurance that Monimia is happy."

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This name was the key that unlocked the faculty of his speech. "I must strive," said he, "to ease the anguish of my heart with that consolation. But say, humane, benevolent lady, to whose compassion and generosity that hapless orphan was indebted for the last peaceful moment she enjoyed upon earth; say, in all your acquaintance with human nature, in all your intercourse with the daughters of men, in all the exercise of your charity and beneficence, did you ever observe such sweetness, purity, and truth; such beauty, sense, and perfection, as that which was the inheritance of her whose fate I shall for ever deplore?"—"She was, indeed," replied the lady, "the best and fairest of our sex."

This was the beginning of a conversation touching that lovely victim, in the course of which he explained those wicked arts which Fathom practised to alienate his affections from the adorable Monimia; and she described the cunning hints and false insinuations by which that traitor had aspersed the unsuspecting lover, and soiled his character in the opinion of the virtuous orphan. The intelligence he obtained on this occasion added indignation to his grief. The whole mystery of Monimia's behaviour, which he could not before explain, now stood disclosed before him. He saw the gradual progress of that infernal plan which had been laid for their mutual ruin; and his soul was inflamed with such desire of vengeance, that he would have taken his leave abruptly, in order to set on foot an immediate inquiry about the perfidious author of his wrongs, that he might exterminate such a monster of iniquity

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from the face of the earth. But he was restrained by Madam Clement, who gave him to understand, that Fathom was already overtaken by the vengeance of Heaven; for she had traced him in all the course of his fortune, from his first appearance in the medical sphere to his total eclipse. She represented the villain as a wretch altogether unworthy of his attention. She said, he was so covered with infamy, that no person could enter the lists against him, without bearing away some stain of dishonour; that he was, at present, peculiarly protected by the law, and sheltered from the resentment of Renaldo, in the cavern of his disgrace.

Melvil, glowing with rage, replied, that he was a venomous serpent, which it was incumbent on every foot to crush; that it was the duty of every man to contribute his whole power in freeing society from such a pernicious hypocrite; and that, if such instances of perfidy and ingratitude were suffered to pass with impunity, virtue and plain-dealing would soon be expelled from the habitations of men. "Over and above these motives," said he, "I own myself so vitiated with the alloy of human passion and infirmity, that I desire — I eagerly pant for an occasion of meeting him hand to hand, where I may upbraid him with his treachery, and shower down vengeance and destruction on his perfidious head."

Then he recounted the anecdotes of our adventurer which he had learned in Germany and Flanders, and concluded with declaring his unalterable resolution of releasing him from jail, that he might have an opportunity of sacrificing him, with his own hand,

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to the manes of Monimia. The discreet lady, perceiving the perturbation of his mind, would not further combat the impetuosity of his passion; contenting herself with exacting a promise, that he would not execute his purpose, until he should have deliberated three days upon the consequences by which a step of that kind might be attended. Before the expiration of that term, she thought measures might be taken to prevent the young gentleman from exposing his life or reputation to unnecessary hazard.

Having complied with her request in this particular, he took his leave, after he had, by repeated entreaties, prevailed upon her to accept a jewel, in token of his veneration for the kind benefactress of the deceased Monimia; nor could his generous heart be satisfied, until he had forced a considerable present on the humane physician who had attended her in her last moments, and now discovered a particular sympathy and concern for her desponding lover. This gentleman attended him to the house of the benevolent Joshua, where they dined, and where Don Diego was recommended, in the most fervid terms of friendship, to the good offices of their host. Not that this duty was performed in presence of the stranger — Renaldo's delicacy would not expose his friend to such a situation. While the physician, before dinner, entertained that stranger in one apartment, Melvil withdrew into another, with the Jew, to whom he disclosed the affair of the Castilian, with certain circumstances, which shall, in due time, be revealed.

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Joshua's curiosity being whetted by this information, he could not help eyeing the Spaniard at table with such a particular stare, that Don Diego perceived his attention, and took umbrage at the freedom of his regard. Being unable to conceal his displeasure, he addressed himself to the Hebrew, with great solemnity, in the Spanish tongue, saying, "Signior, is there any singularity in my appearance? or, do you recollect the features of Don Diego de Zelos?"

"Signior Don Diego," replied the other in pure Castilian, "I crave your pardon for the rudeness of my curiosity, which prompted me to survey a nobleman, whose character I revere, and to whose misfortunes I am no stranger. Indeed, were curiosity alone concerned, I should be without excuse; but as I am heartily inclined to serve you, as far as my weak abilities extend, I hope your generosity will not impute any little involuntary trespass of punctilio to my want of cordiality or esteem."

The Spaniard was not only appeased by this apology, but also affected with the compliment, and the language in which it was conveyed. He thanked the Jew for his kind declaration, entreated him to bear with the peevishness of a disposition sore with the galling hand of affliction; and, turning up his eyes to Heaven, "Were it possible," cried he, "for fate to reconcile contradictions, and recall the irremediable current of events, I would now believe that there was happiness still in reserve for the forlorn Zelos, now that I tread the land of freedom and humanity, now that I find myself befriended by the

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most generous of men. Alas! I ask not happiness! If, by the kind endeavours of the gallant Count de Melvil, to whom I am already indebted for my life, and by the efforts of his friends, the honour of my name shall be purified and cleared from the poisonous stains of malice by which it is at present spotted, I shall then enjoy all that satisfaction which destiny can bestow upon a wretch whose woes are incurable."

Renaldo comforted him with the assurance of his being on the eve of triumphing over his adversaries; and Joshua confirmed the consolation, by giving him to understand, that he had correspondents in Spain of some influence in the state; that he had already written to them on the subject of Don Diego, in consequence of a letter which he had received from Melvil while he tarried at Mons, and that he, every post, expected a favourable answer on that subject.

After dinner, the physician took his leave, though not before he had promised to meet Renaldo at night, and accompany him in the repetition of his midnight visit to Monimia's tomb; for this pilgrimage the unfortunate youth resolved nightly to perform during the whole time of his residence in England. It was, indeed, a sort of pleasure, the prospect of which enabled him to bear the toil of living through the day, though his patience was almost quite exhausted before the hour of assignation arrived.

When the doctor appeared with the coach, he leaped into it with great eagerness, after he had, with much difficulty, prevailed with Don Diego to stay at home, on account of his health, which was not yet perfectly established. The Castilian, how-

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ever, would not comply with his request, until he had obtained the Count's promise, that he should be permitted to accompany him next night, and take that duty alternately with the physician.

About midnight, they reached the place, where they found the sexton in waiting, according to the orders he had received. The door was opened, the mourner conducted to the tomb, and left, as before, to the gloom of his own meditations. Again he laid himself on the cold ground; again he renewed his lamentable strain; his imagination began to be heated into an ecstasy of enthusiasm, during which he again fervently invoked the spirit of his deceased Monimia.

In the midst of these invocations, his ear was suddenly invaded with the sound of some few solemn notes issuing from the organ, which seemed to feel the impulse of an invisible hand.

At this awful salutation, Melvil was roused to the keenest sense of surprise and attention. Reason shrunk before the thronging ideas of his fancy, which represented this music as the prelude to something strange and supernatural; and, while he waited for the sequel, the place was suddenly illuminated, and each surrounding object brought under the cognisance of his eye.

What passed within his mind on this occasion is not easy to be described. All his faculties were swallowed up by those of seeing and hearing. He had mechanically raised himself upon one knee, with his body advancing forwards; and in this attitude he gazed with a look through which his soul seemed

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eager to escape. To his view, thus strained upon vacant space, in a few minutes appeared the figure of a woman arrayed in white, with a veil that covered her face, and flowed down upon her back and shoulders. The phantom approached him with an easy step, and, lifting up her veil, discovered (believe it, O reader!) the individual countenance of Monimia.

At sight of these well-known features, seemingly improved with new celestial graces, the youth became a statue, expressing amazement, love, and awful adoration. He saw the apparition smile with meek benevolence, divine compassion, warm and intendered by that fond pure flame which death could not extinguish. He heard the voice of his Monimia call Renaldo! Thrice he essayed to answer; as oft his tongue denied its office. His hair stood upright, and a cold vapour seemed to thrill through every nerve. This was not fear, but the infirmity of human nature, oppressed by the presence of a superior being.

At length his agony was overcome. He recollected all his resolution, and, in a strain of awestruck rapture, thus addressed the heavenly visitant: "Hast thou then heard, pure spirit! the wailings of my grief? hast thou descended from the realms of bliss, in pity to my woe? and art thou come to speak the words of peace to my desponding soul? To bid the wretched smile, to lift the load of misery and care from the afflicted breast; to fill thy lover's heart with joy and pleasing hope, was still the darling task of my Monimia, ere yet refined to that perfection

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which mortality can never attain. No wonder then, blessed shade, that now, when reunited to thy native heaven, thou art still kind, propitious, and beneficent to us, who groan in this inhospitable vale of sorrow thou hast left. Tell me, ah! tell me, dost thou still remember those fond hours we passed together? Doth that enlightened bosom feel a pang of soft regret, when thou recallest our fatal separation? Sure that meekened glance bespeaks thy sympathy! Ah! how that tender look o'erpowers me! Sacred Heaven! the pearly drops of pity trickle down thy cheeks! Such are the tears that angels shed o'er man's distress! — Turn not away — Thou beckonest me to follow. Yes, I will follow thee, ethereal spirit, as far as these weak limbs, encumbered with mortality, will bear my weight; and, would to Heaven! I could, with ease, put off these vile corporeal shackles, and attend thy flight."

So saying, he started from the ground, and, in a transport of eager expectation, at awful distance, traced the footsteps of the apparition, which, entering a detached apartment, sunk down upon a chair, and with a sigh exclaimed, "Indeed, this is too much!" What was the disorder of Renaldo's mind, when he perceived this phenomenon! Before reflection could perform its office, moved by a sudden impulse, he sprung forwards, crying, "If it be death to touch thee, let me die!" and caught in his arms, not the shadow, but the warm substance of the all-accomplished Monimia. "Mysterious powers of Providence! this is no phantom! this is no shade! this is the life! the panting bosom of her whom I have so long,

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so bitterly deplored! I fold her in my arms! I press her glowing breast to mine! I see her blush with virtuous pleasure and ingenuous love! She smiles upon me with enchanting tenderness! O let me gaze on that transcendent beauty, which, the more I view it, ravishes the more! These charms are too intense; I sicken while I gaze! Merciful Heaven! is not this a mere illusion of the brain? Was she not fled for ever? Had not the cold hand of death divorced her from my hope? This must be some flattering vision of my distempered fancy! perhaps some soothing dream — If such it be, grant, O ye heavenly powers! that I may never wake."

"O gentle youth!" replied the beauteous orphan, still clasped in his embrace, "what joy now fills the bosom of Monimia, at this triumph of thy virtue and thy love? When I see these transports of thy affection, when I find thee restored to that place in my esteem and admiration, which thou hadst lost by the arts of calumny and malice — this is a meeting which my most sanguine hopes durst not presage!"

So entirely were the faculties of Renaldo engrossed in the contemplation of his restored Monimia, that he saw not the rest of the company, who wept with transport over this affecting scene. He was therefore amazed at the interposition of Madam Clement, who, while the shower of sympathetic pleasure bedewed her cheeks, congratulated the lovers upon this happy event, crying, "These are the joys which virtue calls her own." They also received the compliments of a reverend clergyman, who told Monimia, she had reaped, at last, the fruits of that pious

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resignation to the will of Heaven, which she had so devoutly practised during the term of her affliction. And, lastly, they were accosted by the physician, who was not quite so hackneyed in the ways of death, or so callous to the finer sensations of the soul, but that he blubbered plentifully, while he petitioned Heaven in behalf of such an accomplished and deserving pair.

Monimia taking Madam Clement by the hand, "Whatever joy," said she, "Renaldo derives from this occasion, is owing to the bounty, the compassion, and maternal care of this incomparable lady, together with the kind admonitions and humanity of those two worthy gentlemen."

Melvil, whose passions were still in agitation, and whose mind could not yet digest the incidents that occurred, embraced them all by turns; but, like the faithful needle, which, though shaken for an instant from its poise, immediately regains its true direction, and points invariably to the pole, he soon returned to his Monimia; again he held her in his arms, again he drank enchantment from her eyes, and thus poured forth the effusions of his soul: — "Can I then trust the evidence of sense? And art thou really to my wish restored? Never, O never did thy beauty shine with such bewitching grace, as that which now confounds and captivates my view! Sure there is something more than mortal in thy looks! — Where hast thou lived? — where borrowed this perfection? — whence art thou now descended? — Oh! I am all amazement, joy, and fear! — Thou wilt not leave me! — No! we must not part again. By this warm

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kiss! a thousand times more sweet than all the fragrance of the East! we never more will part. O! this is rapture, ecstasy, and what no language can explain!"

In the midst of these ejaculations, he ravished a banquet from her glowing lips, that kindled in his heart a flame which rushed through every vein, and glided to his marrow. This was a privilege he had never claimed before, and now permitted as a recompense for all the penance he had suffered. Nevertheless, the cheeks of Monimia, who was altogether unaccustomed to such familiarities, underwent a total suffusion; and Madam Clement discreetly relieved her from the anxiety of her situation, by interfering in the discourse, and rallying the Count upon his endeavours to monopolise such a branch of happiness.

"O my dear lady!" replied Renaldo, who by this time had, in some measure, recovered his recollection, "forgive the wild transports of a fond lover, who hath so unexpectedly retrieved the jewel of his soul! Yet, far from wishing to hoard up his treasure, he means to communicate and diffuse his happiness to all his friends. O my Monimia! how will the pleasure of this hour be propagated! As yet thou knowest not all the bliss that is reserved for thy enjoyment! — Meanwhile, I long to learn by what contrivance this happy interview hath been effected. Still am I ignorant how I was transported into this apartment, from the lonely vault in which I mourned over my supposed misfortune!"

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CHAPTER SIXTY-FOUR

THE MYSTERY UNFOLDED — ANOTHER RECOGNITION, WHICH, IT IS TO BE HOPED, THE READER COULD NOT FORESEE.

THE French lady then explained the whole mystery of Monimia's death, as a stratagem she had concerted with the clergyman and doctor, in order to defeat the pernicious designs of Fathom, who seemed determined to support his false pretensions by dint of perjury and fraud, which they would have found it very difficult to elude. She observed, that the physician had actually despaired of Monimia's life, and it was not till after she herself was made acquainted with the prognostic, that she wrote the letter to Renaldo, which she committed to the care of Madam Clement, with an earnest entreaty, that it should not be sent till after her decease. But that lady, believing the Count had been certainly abused by his treacherous confidant, despatched the billet without the knowledge of Monimia, whose health was restored by the indefatigable care of the physician, and the sage exhortations of the clergyman, by which she was reconciled to life. In a word, the villany of Fathom had inspired her with some faint hope that Renaldo

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might still be innocent; and that notion contributed not a little to her cure.

The letter having so effectually answered their warmest hopes, in bringing back Renaldo such a pattern of constancy and love, the confederates, in consequence of his enthusiastic sorrow, had planned this meeting, as the most interesting way of restoring two virtuous lovers to the arms of each other; for which purpose the good clergyman had pitched upon his own church, and indulged them with the use of the vestry, in which they now were presented with a small but elegant collation.

Melvil heard this succinct detail with equal joy and admiration. He poured forth the dictates of his gratitude to the preservers of his happiness. — "This church," said he, "shall henceforth possess a double share of my veneration; this holy man will, I hope, finish the charitable work he has begun, by tying those bands of our happiness, which nought but death shall have power to unbind." Then turning to that object which was the star of his regard, "Do I not overrate," said he, "my interest with the fair Monimia?" She made no verbal reply; but answered by an emphatic glance, more eloquent than all the power of rhetoric and speech. This language, which is universal in the world of love, he perfectly well understood, and, in token of that faculty, sealed the assent which she had smiled, with a kiss imprinted on her polished forehead.

In order to dissipate these interesting ideas, which, by being too long indulged, might have endangered his reason, Madam Clement entreated him to enter-

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tain the company with a detail of what had happened to him in his last journey to the empire, and Monimia expressed a desire of knowing, in particular, the issue of his contest with Count Trebasi, who, she knew, had usurped the succession of his father.

Thus solicited, he could not refuse to gratify their curiosity and concern. He explained his obligations to the benevolent Jew; related the steps he had taken at Vienna for the recovery of his inheritance; informed them of his happy rencontre with his father-in-law; of his sister's deliverance and marriage; of the danger into which his life had been precipitated by the news of Monimia's death; and, lastly, of his adventure with the banditti, in favour of a gentleman, who, he afterwards understood, had been robbed in the most base and barbarous manner by Fathom. He likewise, to the astonishment of all present, and of his mistress in particular, communicated some circumstances, which shall appear in due season.

Monimia's tender frame being quite fatigued with the scene she had acted, and her mind overwhelmed with the prosperous tidings she had heard, after having joined the congratulations of the company, on the good fortune of her Renaldo, begged leave to retire, that she might by repose recruit her exhausted spirits; and the night being pretty far spent, she was conducted by her lover to Madam Clement's coach, that stood in waiting, in which also the rest of the company made shift to embark, and were carried to the house of that good lady, where, after they were invited to dine, and Melvil entreated

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to bring Don Diego and the Jew along with them, they took leave of one another, and retired to their respective lodgings in a transport of joy and satisfaction.

As for Renaldo, his rapture was still mixed with apprehension, that all he had seen and heard was no more than an unsubstantial vision, raised by some gay delirium of a disordered imagination. While his breast underwent those violent, though blissful emotions of joy and admiration, his friend the Castilian spent the night in ruminating over his own calamities, and in a serious and severe review of his own conduct. He compared his own behaviour with that of the young Hungarian, and found himself so light in the scale, that he smote his breast with violence, exclaiming in an agony of remorse:

"Count Melvil has reason to grieve; Don Diego to despair. His misfortunes flow from the villany of mankind; mine are the fruit of my own madness. He laments the loss of a mistress, who fell a sacrifice to the perfidious arts of a crafty traitor. She was beautiful, virtuous, accomplished, and affectionate; he was fraught with sensibility and love. Doubtless his heart must have deeply suffered; his behaviour denotes the keenness of his woe; his eyes are ever-flowing fountains of tears; his bosom the habitation of sighs; five hundred leagues hath he measured in a pilgrimage to her tomb; nightly he visits the dreary vault where she now lies at rest; her solitary grave is his couch; he converses with darkness and the dead, until each lonely aisle re-echoes his distress. What would be his penance, had he my cause! were he

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conscious of having murdered a beloved wife and darling daughter! Ah wretch! — ah cruel homicide! — what had those dear victims done to merit such a fate? Were they not ever gentle and obedient, ever aiming to give thee satisfaction and delight? Say, that Serafina was enamoured of a peasant; say, that she had degenerated from the honour of her race: The inclinations are involuntary; perhaps that stranger was her equal in pedigree and worth. Had they been fairly questioned, they might have justified, at least excused, that conduct which appeared so criminal; or had they owned the offence, and supplicated pardon — O barbarous monster that I am! was all the husband — was all the father extinguished in my heart? How shall my own errors be forgiven, if I refused to pardon the frailties of my own blood — of those who are most dear to my affection? Yet nature pleaded strongly in their behalf! — My heart was bursting while I dismissed them to the shades of death. I was maddened with revenge! I was guided by that savage principle which falsely we call honour.

"Accursed phantom! that assumes the specious title, and misleads our wretched nation! Is it then honourable to skulk like an assassin, and plunge the secret dagger in the heart of some unhappy man, who hath incurred my groundless jealousy or suspicion, without indulging him with that opportunity which the worst criminal enjoys? Or is it honourable to poison two defenceless women, a tender wife, an amiable daughter, whom even a frown would almost have destroyed? — O! this is cowardice, brutal-

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ity, hell-born fury and revenge! Heaven hath not mercy to forgive such execrable guilt. Who gave thee power, abandoned ruffian! over the lives of those whom God hath stationed as thy fellows of probation; — over those whom he had sent to comfort and assist thee; to sweeten all thy cares, and smooth the rough uneven paths of life? O! I am doomed to never-ceasing horror and remorse! If misery can atone for such enormous guilt, I have felt it in the extreme. Like an undying vulture it preys upon my heart; — to sorrow I am wedded; I hug that teeming consort to my soul; — never, ah! never shall we part; for soon as my fame shall shine unclouded by the charge of treason that now hangs over it, I will devote myself to penitence and woe. A cold, damp pavement shall be my bed; my raiment shall be sackcloth; the fields shall furnish herbage for my food; the stream shall quench my thirst; the minutes shall be numbered by my groans; the night be privy to my strains of sorrow, till Heaven, in pity to my sufferings, release me from the penance I endure. Perhaps the saints whom I have murdered will intercede for my remission."

Such was the exercise of grief, in which the hapless Castilian consumed the night; he had not yet consigned himself to rest, when Renaldo entering his chamber, displayed such a gleam of wildness and rapture on his countenance, as overwhelmed him with amazement; for, till that moment, he had never seen his visage unobscured with woe. "Pardon this abrupt intrusion, my friend," cried Melvil, "I could no longer withhold from your participation, the great,

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the unexpected turn, which hath this night dispelled all my sorrows, and restored me to the fruition of ineffable joy. Monimia lives! — the fair, the tender, the virtuous Monimia lives, and smiles upon my vows! This night I retrieved her from the grave. I held her in these arms; I pressed her warm delicious lips to mine! Oh, I am giddy with intolerable pleasure!"

Don Diego was confounded at this declaration, which he considered as the effects of a disordered brain. He never doubted that Renaldo's grief had at length overpowered his reason, and that his words were the effects of mere frenzy. While he mused on this melancholy subject, the Count composed his features, and, in a succinct and well-connected detail, explained the whole mystery of his happiness, to the inexpressible astonishment of the Spaniard, who shed tears of satisfaction, and straining the Hungarian to his breast, "O my son," said he, "you see what recompense Heaven hath in store for those who pursue the paths of real virtue; those paths from which I myself have been fatally misled by a faithless vapour, which hath seduced my steps, and left me darkling in the abyss of wretchedness. Such as you describe this happy fair, was once my Serafina, rich in every grace of mind and body which nature could bestow. Had it pleased Heaven to bless her with a lover like Renaldo! but no more, the irrevocable shaft is fled. I will not taint your enjoyment with my unavailing sighs!"

Melvil assured this disconsolate father, that no pleasure, no avocation should ever so entirely engross

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his mind, but that he should still find an hour for sympathy and friendship. He communicated the invitation of Madam Clement, and insisted upon his compliance, that he might have an opportunity of seeing and approving the object of his passion. "I can refuse nothing to the request of Count de Melvil," replied the Spaniard, "and it were ungrateful in me to decline the honour you propose. I own myself inflamed with a desire of beholding a young lady, whose perfections I have seen reflected in your sorrow; my curiosity is, moreover, interested on account of that humane gentlewoman, whose uncommon generosity sheltered such virtue in distress; but my disposition is infectious, and will, I am afraid, hang like a damp upon the general festivity of your friends."

Melvil would take no denial, and having obtained his consent, repaired to the house of Joshua, whose countenance seemed to unbend gradually into a total expression of joy and surprise, as he learned the circumstances of this amazing event. He faithfully promised to attend the Count at the appointed hour, and, in the meantime, earnestly exhorted him to take some repose, in order to quiet the agitation of his spirits, which must have been violently hurried on this occasion. The advice was salutary, and Renaldo resolved to follow it.

He returned to his lodgings, and laid himself down; but, notwithstanding the fatigue he had undergone, sleep refused to visit his eyelids, all his faculties being kept in motion by the ideas that crowded so fast upon his imagination. Neverthe-

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less, though his mind continued in agitation, his body was refreshed, and he arose in the forenoon with more serenity and vigour than he had enjoyed for many months. Every moment his heart throbbed with new rapture, when he found himself on the brink of possessing all that his soul held dear and amiable; he put on his gayest looks and apparel; insisted upon the Castilian's doing the same honour to the occasion; and the alteration of dress produced such an advantageous change in the appearance of Don Diego, that when Joshua arrived at the appointed hour, he could scarce recognise his features, and complimented him very politely on the improvement of his looks.

True it is, the Spaniard was a personage of a very prepossessing mien and noble deportment; and had not grief, by increasing his native gravity, in some measure discomposed the symmetry of his countenance, he would have passed for a man of a very amiable and engaging physiognomy. They set out in the Jew's coach for the house of Madam Clement, and were ushered into an apartment, where they found the clergyman and physician with that lady, to whom Don Diego and the Hebrew were by Melvil introduced.

Before they had seated themselves, Renaldo inquired about the health of Monimia, and was directed to the next room by Madam Clement, who permitted him to go thither, and conduct her to the company. He was not slow of availing himself of this permission. He disappeared in an instant, and, during his short absence, Don Diego was strangely disturbed.

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The blood flushed and forsook his cheeks by turns; a cold vapour seemed to shiver through his nerves; and at his breast he felt uncommon palpitation. Madam Clement observed his discomposure, and kindly inquired into the cause; when he replied, "I have such an interest in what concerns the Count de Melvil, and my imagination is so much prepossessed with the perfections of Monimia, that I am, as it were, agonised with expectation; yet never did my curiosity before raise such tumults as those that now agitate my bosom."

He had scarce pronounced these words, when the door, reopening, Renaldo led in this mirror of elegance and beauty, at sight of whom the Israelite's countenance was distorted into a stare of admiration. But if such was the astonishment of Joshua, what were the emotions of the Castilian, when, in the beauteous orphan, he beheld the individual features of his long-lost Serafina!

His feelings are not to be described. The fond parent, whose affection shoots even to a sense of pain, feels not half such transport, when he unexpectedly retrieves a darling child from the engulfing billows or devouring flame. The hope of Zelos had been totally extinguished. His heart had been incessantly torn with anguish and remorse, upbraiding him as the murderer of Serafina. His, therefore, were the additional transports of a father disburdened of the guilt of such enormous homicide. His nerves were too much overpowered by this sudden recognition, to manifest the sensation of his soul by external signs. He started not, nor did he lift an hand in token of

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surprise; he moved not from the spot on which he stood; but, riveting his eyes to those of the lovely phantom, remained without motion, until she, approaching with her lover, fell at his feet, and clasping his knees, exclaimed, "May I yet call you father?"

This powerful shock aroused his faculties; a cold sweat bedewed his forehead; his knees began to totter; he dropped upon the floor, and throwing his arms around her, cried, "O nature! O Serafina! Merciful Providence! thy ways are past finding out." So saying, he fell upon her neck, and wept aloud. The tears of sympathetic joy trickled down her snowy bosom, that heaved with rapture inexpressible. Renaldo's eyes poured forth the briny stream. The cheeks of Madam Clement were not dry in this conjuncture; she kneeled by Serafina, kissed her with all the eagerness of maternal affection, and with uplifted hands adored the Power that preordained this blessed event. The clergyman and doctor intimately shared the general transport; and as for Joshua, the drops of true benevolence flowed from his eyes, like the oil on Aaron's beard, while he skipped about the room in an awkward ecstasy, and in a voice resembling the hoarse notes of the long-eared tribe, cried, "O father Abraham! such a moving scene hath not been acted since Joseph disclosed himself unto his brethren in Egypt."

Don Diego having found utterance to his passion, proceeded in this strain: "O my dear child! to find thee thus again, after our last unhappy parting, is wonderful! miraculous! Blessed be the all-good,

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almighty Power that saved thee for this hour of joy! Yet, while my heart yearns towards thee; while I pant with inconceivable affection, and thus review these living features, which were so long my study and delight, I dare not ask by what mysterious means this meeting is effected; lest, in the fond inquiry, I find my present bliss unreal, and awake to misery again!"

"O ever-honoured father!" she replied, "if to see your Serafina at your feet, melting with filial love and veneration, can impart a gleam of satisfaction to your breast, enjoy that pleasure, and behold her now restored to your protection and paternal will, which she never more will disobey. Alas! had Heaven thought proper to reserve another parent for this interview, our joys had been complete; but she hath already paid her debt to nature, and from the seats of bliss looks down well pleased on this interesting scene."

"Ah, my Antonia!" cried the father, interrupting her, "she is then at rest. Peace be to her unspotted soul! to have found her here, had been too much. How my Serafina hath survived my blindfold rage, I know not; but sure the guilt of fair Antonia's death still hangs upon my soul."

"Dismiss that fatal thought," said Serafina, "my mother quietly bade adieu to life in England; she peaceably expired within these arms, and with her latest breath prayed for her hapless husband." "Her mind was ever god-like," he resumed; "she was a saint in virtue, ill bestowed on such a wretch as me; yet thy words have raised a dreadful burden from

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my conscience. I am not then the dire assassin, who sacrificed his wife and daughter to an infernal motive, falsely titled honour? though I am more and more involved in a mystery, which I long to hear explained."

"That shall be my task," cried Renaldo, "but first permit me to implore your sanction to my passion for the incomparable Serafina. You already know our mutual sentiments; and though I own the possession of such inestimable worth and beauty would be a recompense that infinitely transcends the merit I can plead, yet, as it hath been my good fortune to inspire her with a mutual flame, I hope to reap from your indulgence here, what I could not expect from my own desert; and we present ourselves, in hope of your paternal assent and benediction."

"Were she more fair and good and gentle than she is," answered the Castilian, "and to my partial observation nought e'er appeared on earth more beauteous and engaging, I would approve your title to her heart, and recommend you to her smiles, with all a father's influence and power. Yes, my daughter! my joy on this occasion is infinitely augmented by the knowledge of those tender ties of love that bind thee to this amiable youth; a youth to whose uncommon courage and generosity I owe my life and my subsistence, together with the inexpressible delight that now revels in my bosom. Enjoy, my children, the happy fruits of your reciprocal attachment. May Heaven, which hath graciously conducted you through a labyrinth of perplexity and woe, to this transporting view of blissful days, indulge you with that unin-

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terrupted stream of pure felicity, which is the hope, and ought to be the boon of virtue, such as yours!"

So saying, he joined their hands, and embraced them with the most cordial love and satisfaction, which diffused itself to every individual of the company, who fervently invoked the Almighty Power, in behalf of this enraptured pair. The tumult of these emotions having a little subsided, and the Castilian being seated betwixt Renaldo and his beauteous bride, he politely bespoke the indulgence of Madam Clement, begging she would permit him to demand the performance of the Count's promise, that he might be forthwith made acquainted with those circumstances of his own fate which he was so impatient to learn.

The lady having assured him, that she and all the company would take pleasure in hearing the recapitulation, the Spaniard, addressing himself to Melvil, "In the name of Heaven!" said he, "how could you supplant that rival, who fell a sacrifice to my resentment, after he had bewitched the heart of Serafina? for, sure, the affection he had kindled in her breast must have long survived his death." "That rival," replied the Count, "who incurred your displeasure, was no other than Renaldo." With these words, he applied to one eye a patch of black silk provided for the purpose, and turning his face towards Don Diego, that gentleman started with astonishment, crying, "Good Heaven! the very countenance of Orlando, whom I slew! this is still more amazing!"

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CHAPTER SIXTY-FIVE

A RETROSPECTIVE LINK, NECESSARY FOR THE CONCATENATION OF THESE MEMOIRS.

"INDULGE me with a patient hearing," proceeded the Hungarian, "and all these riddles soon will be explained. Inflamed with the desire of seeing foreign countries, I disobeyed the will of an indulgent father, from whose house, withdrawing privately, I set out for Italy, in disguise, by the way of Tyrol, visited Venice, Rome, Florence, and, embarking at Naples, in an English ship, arrived at St. Lucar, from whence I repaired to Seville; there, in a few days, was my curiosity engaged by the fame of the fair Serafina, who was justly deemed the most accomplished beauty in that part of Spain. Nay, blush not, gentle creature! for by my hopes of heaven! thy charms were even injured by the cold applause of that report. Nevertheless, I was warmly interested by the uncommon character, and eagerly longed to see this pattern of perfection. As Don Diego did not train her up in that restraint to which the Spanish ladies are subjected, I soon found an opportunity of seeing her at church; and no person here present will, I presume, doubt but that I was instantly captivated by her beauty and deportment. Had I thought that Don

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Diego's favour was unengaged, perhaps I should have followed the dictates of vanity and inexperience, and presented myself in my own character, among the crowd of her professed admirers. I knew her father had been an officer of distinguished rank and reputation, and did not doubt that he would have regarded a young soldier of unexceptionable pedigree, and, I will even add, of untainted fame. Nor did I suppose my own father could have objected against such an advantageous match; but, by dint of industrious inquiry, I learned, that the divine Serafina was already betrothed to Don Manuel de Mendoza, and this information overwhelmed me with despair.

"After having revolved a thousand projects for retarding and preventing that detested union, I resolved to avail myself of my talent for drawing, and professed myself a master of that science, in hope of being employed by the father of Serafina, who, I knew, let slip no opportunity of improving his daughter's education. Accordingly I had the good fortune to attract his notice, was invited to his house, honoured with his approbation, and furnished with unrestricted opportunities of conversing with the dear object of my love. The passion which her beauty had kindled was by the perfections of her mind inflamed to such a degree of transport, as could not be concealed from her penetration. She chanced to relish my conversation; I gradually acquired her friendship; pity was the next passion that she entertained in my favour. I then ventured to disclose myself, and the dear charmer did not disapprove of my presumption. She and her mother had been

She chanced to relish my conversation.

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perplexed with some religious scruples, concerning which they appealed to my opinion; and I was happy enough to set their minds at ease.

"This sort of intercourse naturally created a mutual confidence among us; and, in a word, I was blessed with the daughter's love and mother's approbation. Don Diego will pardon these clandestine measures, which we took, from a full persuasion that it was impossible to render him propitious to the views in which our hearts and hands were so deeply interested. I did not then know how little he was addicted to superstition.

"Without entering into a detail of the schemes we projected to delay the happiness of Mendoza, I shall only observe, that, knowing the fatal day was at length unalterably fixed, we determined to elude the purpose of Don Diego by flight; and everything was actually prepared for our escape. When the hour of appointment arrived, I repaired to the place at which I had proposed to enter the house, and stumbled, in the dark, over the body of a man still warm, and bleeding. Alarmed at this occurrence, I darted myself through the window, and rushing to the apartment of the ladies, (immortal powers!) beheld the peerless Serafina, and her virtuous mother, stretched on a couch, and, in all appearance, deprived of life.

"The company will easily conceive what agonies I felt at such a spectacle! I ran towards the spot in a transport of horror! I clasped my lovely mistress in my arms, and, finding her still breathing, endeavoured, but in vain, to wake her from the trance.

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Antonia was overwhelmed with the same lethargic power. My fancy was immediately struck with the apprehension of their being poisoned. Regardless of my own situation, I alarmed the family, called for assistance, and requested the servants to summon Don Diego to the dismal scene. I was informed that their master had rode forth in manifest confusion; and while I pondered on this surprising excursion, an apothecary in the neighbourhood entered the chamber, and having examined the pulses of the ladies, declared that their lives were in no danger, and advised that they should be undressed, and conveyed to bed. While their women were busied in this employment, I went into the court-yard, attended by some of the servants with lights, in order to view the body of the man which I had found at my arrival. His apparel was mean, his countenance ferocious; a long spado was buckled to his thigh, and, in his belt, were stuck a brace of loaded pistols; so that we concluded he was some thief, who had waited for an opportunity, and seeing the casement open, intended to rob the house, but was prevented, and slain by Don Diego himself, whose retreat, however, did not a little confound our conjecture. For my own part, I remained all night in the house, tortured with fear, vexation, and suspense.

"My hope was altogether disappointed by this unhappy accident; and I shuddered at the prospect of losing Serafina for ever, either by this mysterious malady, or by her marriage with Mendoza, which I now despaired of being able to defeat. The major-domo having waited several hours for his lord's return,

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without seeing him appear, thought proper to despatch a messenger to Don Manuel, with an account of what had happened; and that nobleman arriving in the morning, took possession of the house. About four o'clock in the afternoon, Serafina began to stir, and, at five, she and her mother were perfectly awake.

"They no sooner recovered the use of reflection, than they gave signs of equal sorrow and amazement, and earnestly called for Isabella, who was privy to our design, and who, after a very minute inquiry, was found in a lone and solitary chamber, where she had been confined. Such was the confusion of the house, that no person ever dreamed of asking how I entered, each domestic, in all probability, supposing I had been introduced by his fellow; so that I tarried unquestioned, on pretence of concern for the distress of a family in which I had been so generously entertained, and, by Isabella, sent my respects and duty to her ladies. She was, therefore, not a little surprised, when, after every other servant had withdrawn, she heard the lovely Serafina exclaim, with all the violence of grief, 'Ah! Isabella, Orlando is no more!' But their astonishment was still greater, when she assured them of my being alive, and in the house. They recounted to her the adventure of last night, which she explained, by informing them of the letters which Don Diego had intercepted. And they immediately concluded, that he had, in the precipitation of his wrath, killed, by mistake, the person who was found dead in the court-yard. This conjecture alarmed them on my account; they, by

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the medium of Isabella, conjured me to leave the house, lest Don Diego should return, and accomplish his resentment; and I was persuaded to withdraw, after I had settled the channel of a correspondence with the confidant.

"Being now obliged to alter our measures, because our former intention was discovered by Don Diego, I secured a retreat for Serafina and her mother, at the house of the English consul in Seville, who was my particular friend; and, next day, understanding from Isabella that her lord had not yet reappeared, and that Don Manuel was very urgent in his addresses, we concerted an assignation in the garden, and that same evening I was fortunate enough to convey my prize to the asylum I had prepared for their reception. Inexpressible was the rage of Mendoza, when he heard of their elopement. He raved like one deprived of reason — swore he would put all the servants of the family to the rack — and, in consequence of the intelligence he obtained by threats and promises, set on foot a very strict inquiry, in order to apprehend the fugitives and Orlando, who had by some means or other incurred his suspicion.

"We eluded his search by the vigilance and caution of our kind host; and, while we remained in concealment, were extremely astonished to hear that the unfortunate Don Diego was proclaimed a traitor, and a price set upon his head. This information overwhelmed us all with the utmost affliction. Antonia lamented, without ceasing, the disgrace of her beloved lord, from whom she never would have withdrawn herself, but with the lively hope of a recon-

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ciliation, after the first transports of his ire should have subsided, and the real character of Orlando should have appeared. It was not long before we had reason to believe that Mendoza was the accuser of Don Diego —

"Nay, start not, Signior; Manuel was actually that traitor! This was the turn of his revenge! when he found himself disappointed in the hope of possessing the incomparable Serafina, he took a base advantage of your absence and retreat. He posted to Madrid, impeached you to the secretary of state of having maintained a criminal correspondence with the enemies of Spain, included me in his accusation, as a spy for the house of Austria, and framed such a plausible tale, from the circumstances of your distress, that Don Diego was outlawed, and Mendoza gratified with a grant of his estate.

"These melancholy incidents made a deep impression upon the mind of the virtuous Antonia, who waiving every other consideration, would have personally appeared for the vindication of her husband's honour, had not we dissuaded her from such a rash undertaking, by demonstrating her inability to contend with such a powerful antagonist; and representing that her appearance would be infallibly attended with the ruin of Serafina, who would certainly fall into the hands of the villain to whom she had been contracted. We exhorted her to wait patiently for some happy revolution of fortune, and encouraged her with the hope of Don Diego's exerting himself effectually in his own defence.

"Meanwhile our worthy landlord was suddenly

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cut off by death; and his widow being resolved to retire into her own country, we secretly embarked in the same ship, and arrived in England about eighteen months ago. Antonia still continued to pine over the ruin of her house; as she could hear no tidings of Don Diego, she concluded he was dead, and mourned with unabating sorrow. In vain I assured her, that, soon as my own affairs should be adjusted, I would exert my whole endeavours to find and succour him. She could not imagine that a man of his spirit and disposition would live so long in obscurity. And her affliction derived new force from the death of the consul's widow, with whom she had lived in the most unbounded intimacy and friendship. From that day, her health evidently declined. She foresaw her dissolution, and comforted herself with the hope of seeing her husband and her friend in a place where no treachery is felt, and no sorrow is known; confident of my integrity, and the purity of my love, she, in the most pathetic terms, recommended Serafina to my care.

"Ha! weepest thou, fair excellence, at the remembrance of that tender scene, when the good Antonia, on the bed of death, joined thy soft hand to mine, and said, 'Renaldo, I bequeath this orphan to your love; it is a sacred pledge, which, if you cherish with due honour and regard, internal peace and happiness will ever smile within your bosom; but if you treat it with indifference, dishonour, or neglect, just Heaven will punish your breach of trust with everlasting disappointments and disquiet.'

"Signior Don Diego, I see you are moved, and

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therefore will not dwell on such distressful circumstances. The excellent Antonia exchanged this life for a more happy state; and so exquisite was the sorrow of the tender-hearted Serafina, as to torture me with the apprehension that she would not long survive her pious mother. How I obeyed the injunctions of that departing saint, Monimia (for that name she now assumed) can testify, until that artful serpent Fathom glided into our mutual confidence, abused our ears, poisoned our unsuspected faith, and effected that fatal breach, productive of all the misery and vexation which we have suffered, and which is now so happily expelled."

"Heaven," said the Castilian, "hath visited me for the sins and errors of my youth; yet, such mercy hath been mingled with its chastisements, I dare not murmur or repine. The tears of penitence and sorrow shall water my Antonia's grave; as for Mendoza, I rejoice at his treachery, by which the obligation of my promise is cancelled, and my honour fully acquitted. He shall not triumph in his guilt. My services, my character, and innocence shall soon confront his perfidy, and, I hope, defeat his interest. The King is just and gracious, nor is my family and name unknown."

Here the Jew interposing, presented to him a letter from a person of consequence at Madrid, whom Joshua had interested in the cause of Don Diego; that nobleman had already found means to represent the case of Zelos to his Majesty, who had actually ordered Don Manuel to be confined, until the injured person should appear to justify himself, and prose-

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cute his accuser according to the terms of law. At the same time Don Diego was summoned to present himself before the King within a limited time, to answer to the charge which Mendoza had brought against him.

The Spaniard's heart overflowed with gratitude and joy, when he read this intimation; he embraced the Jew, who, before Zelos could give utterance to his thoughts, told him that the Spanish Ambassador at London, having been prepossessed in his favour, craved the honour of seeing Don Diego; and that he, Joshua, was ready to conduct him to the house.

"Then is my heart at rest!" cried the Castilian; "the house of Zelos once more shall lift up its head. I shall again revisit my native country with honour, and abase the villain who hath soiled my fame! O my children! this day is replete with such joy and satisfaction, as I did not think had been in the power of Heaven to grant, without the interposition of a miracle! To you, Renaldo, to you illustrious lady, and to these worthy gentlemen, am I indebted for the restoration of that for which alone I wish to live; and when my heart ceases to retain the obligation, may I forfeit the name of a Castilian, and scorn and dishonour be my portion."

Perhaps all Europe could not produce another company so happy as that which now sat down to dinner in the house of Madam Clement, whose own benevolent heart was peculiarly adapted for such enjoyment. The lovers feasted their eyes more than

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their appetite, by a tender intercourse of glances, which needed not the slow interpretation of speech; while the Spaniard regarded them alternately with looks of wonder and paternal joy, and every individual surveyed the all-deserving pair with admiration and esteem.

Serafina taking the advantage of this general satisfaction, when the heart, softened into complacency, deposits every violent thought: "I must now," said she, "try my interest with Renaldo. The good company shall bear witness to my triumph or repulse. I do not ask you to forgive, but to withhold your vengeance from the wretched Fathom. His fraud, ingratitude, and villany are, I believe, unrivalled; yet his base designs have been defeated; and Heaven perhaps hath made him the involuntary instrument for bringing our constancy and virtue to the test; besides, his perfidy is already punished with the last degree of human misery and disgrace. The doctor, who has traced him in all his conduct and vicissitudes of fortune, will draw a picture of his present wretchedness, which, I doubt not, will move your compassion, as it hath already excited mine."

The generous hostess was ready to enforce this charitable proposal with all her eloquence, when Melvil, with a look that well expressed his magnanimity of love, replied, "Such a boon becomes the gentle Serafina! O! every moment furnishes me with fresh matter to admire the virtues of thy soul. If thou, whose tender heart hath been so rent with misery and anguish, canst intercede for thy tormentor, who now suffers in his turn, shall I refuse to

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pardon the miserable wretch! No, let me glory in imitating the great example, and solicit Don Diego in behalf of the same miscreant whose perfidious barbarity cost him such intolerable woe." "Enough," cried the Castilian, "I have disclaimed the vindictive principles of a Spaniard; and leave the miserable object to the sting of his own conscience, which, soon or late, will not fail to avenge the wrongs we have sustained from his deceit."

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CHAPTER SIXTY-SIX

THE HISTORY DRAWS NEAR A PERIOD.

UNIVERSAL was the applause which they acquired by this noble sacrifice of their resentment. The afternoon was spent in the utmost harmony and good-humour; and at the earnest solicitation of Renaldo, whose fancy still harboured the apprehensions of another separation, Don Diego consented that the indissoluble knot should be tied between that young gentleman and Serafina in two days, and the place appointed for the ceremony was the very church where they had been restored to the arms of each other.

The lovely bride, with a silent blush that set her lover's heart on fire, submitted to this determination, in consequence of which the company was bespoke for that auspicious hour, and the evening being pretty far advanced, they took leave of the ladies, and retired to their respective homes; Don Diego and his future son-in-law being reconducted to their lodgings, in the coach of the Jew, who, taking an opportunity of being alone with Melvil, observed that it would be necessary on this occasion to supply the Castilian with a sum of money, in order to sup-

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port his dignity and independence, in furnishing Serafina with everything suitable to her rank and merit; and that he would willingly accommodate him, provided he knew how to propose it so as to give no offence to his punctilious disposition.

Renaldo, thanking him for this generous anticipation, advised him to solicit the Spaniard's correspondence in the way of business, and to put the whole on the footing of his own interest; by which means Don Diego's delicacy could sustain no affront. Fraught with this instruction, the Israelite desired a private audience of the Castilian, in which, after an apology for the freedom of his demand, "Signior Don Diego," said he, "as your fortune hath been so long embezzled by your adversary in Spain, and your correspondence with that country entirely cut off, it is not to be supposed that your finances are at present in such a condition as to maintain the splendour of your family. Count de Melvil's whole fortune is at your command; and had not he been afraid of giving umbrage to the peculiar delicacy of your sentiments, he would have pressed you to use it for your convenience. For my own part, over and above the inclination I have to serve Don Diego, I consult my own private advantage in desiring you to accept my service on this occasion. Money is the chief commodity in which I deal, and, if you honour me with your commands, I shall be a gainer by my obedience."

Don Diego replied, with a smile that denoted how well he understood the meaning of this address, "Surely, Signior, I am bound by the strongest ties to exert my utmost endeavours for your advantage;

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and I pray God this your proposal may have that issue. I am well acquainted with the Count's generosity and refined notions of honour; and too much obliged by him already, to hesitate with punctilious reserve in accepting his future assistance. Nevertheless, since you have contrived a scheme for removing all scruples of that sort, I shall execute it with pleasure; and, in the form of business, you shall have all the security I can give for what shall be necessary to answer my present occasions."

The preliminaries being thus settled, Joshua advanced for his use a thousand pounds, for which he would take neither bond, note, nor receipt, desiring only that the Castilian would mark it in his own pocket-book, that the debt might appear, in case any accident should befall the borrower. Although the Spaniard had been accustomed to the uncommon generosity of Melvil, he could not help wondering at this nobleness of behaviour, so little to be expected from any merchant, much less from a Jewish broker.

While this affair was on the anvil, Renaldo, who could no longer withhold the communication of his happiness from his sister and relations in Germany, took up the pen, and, in a letter to his brother-in-law, recounted all the circumstances of the surprising turn of fate which he had experienced since his arrival in England. He likewise related the story of Don Diego, informed them of the day appointed for his nuptials, and entreated the Major to make a journey to London with his wife; or, if that should be impracticable, to come as far as Brussels, where they should be met by him and his Serafina. There was

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now but one day between him and the accomplishment of his dearest wish, and that was spent in procuring a licence, and adjusting the preparations for the grand festival. Don Diego in the forenoon visited Madam Clement, to whom he repeated his warm acknowledgments of her bounty and maternal affection to his daughter, and presented to Serafina bank notes to the amount of five hundred pounds, to defray the necessary expense for her wedding ornaments.

All the previous steps being taken for the solemnisation of this interesting event, and the hour of appointment arrived, the bridegroom, accompanied by his father-in-law, hastened to the place of rendezvous, which was the vestry-room of the church we have already described; where they were received by the good clergyman in his canonicals; and here they had not waited many minutes, when they were joined by Madam Clement and the amiable bride, escorted by the friendly physician, who had all along borne such a share in their concerns. Serafina was dressed in a sack of white satin, and the ornaments of her head were adjusted in the Spanish fashion, which gave a peculiar air to her appearance, and an additional spirit to those attractions which engaged the heart of each beholder. There was nothing remarkable in the habit of Renaldo, who had copied the plainness and elegance of his mistress; but, when she entered the place, his features were animated with a double proportion of vivacity, and their eyes meeting, seemed to kindle a blaze which diffused warmth and joy through the countenances of all present.

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After a short pause, her father led her to the altar, and gave her away to the transported Renaldo, before the priest who performed the ceremony, and bestowed the nuptial benediction on this enraptured pair. The sanction of the church being thus obtained, they withdrew into the vestry, where Melvil sealed his title on her rosy lips, and presented his wife to the company, who embraced her in their turns, with fervent wishes for their mutual happiness.

Though the scene of this transaction was remote from any inhabited neighbourhood, the church was surrounded by a crowd of people, who, with uncommon demonstration of surprise and admiration, petitioned Heaven to bless so fair a couple. Such indeed was their eagerness to see them, that some lives were endangered by the pressure of the crowd, which attended them with loud acclamations to the coach, after the bridegroom had deposited in the hands of the minister one hundred pounds for the benefit of the poor of that parish, and thrown several handfuls of money among the multitude. Serafina re-embarked in Madam Clement's convenience, with that good lady and Don Diego, while Renaldo, with the clergyman and doctor, followed in Joshua's coach, to a pleasant country-house upon the Thames, at a distance of a few miles from London. This the Jew had borrowed from the owner for a few days, and there they were received by that honest Hebrew, who had provided a very elegant entertainment for the occasion. He had also bespoke a small but excellent band of music, which regaled their ears while they sat at dinner; and the afternoon being calm and

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serene, he prevailed on them to take the air on the river, in a barge which he had prepared for the purpose.

But, notwithstanding this diversity of amusement, Renaldo would have found it the longest day he had ever passed, had not his imagination been diverted by an incident which employed his attention during the remaining part of the evening. They had drunk tea, and engaged in a party at whist, when they were surprised with a noise of contention from a public-house, that fronted the windows of the apartment in which they sat. Alarmed at this uproar, they forsook their cards, and, throwing up the casement, beheld a hearse surrounded by four men on horseback, who had stopped the carriage, and violently pulled the driver from his seat. This uncommon arrest had engaged the curiosity of the publican's family, who stood at the door to observe the consequence, when all of a sudden appeared a person in canonicals, well mounted, who, riding up to those who maltreated the driver, bestowed upon one of them such a blow with the butt-end of his whip, as laid him sprawling on the ground; and, springing from his saddle upon the box, took the reins into his own hand, swearing with great vehemence, that he would murder every man who should attempt to obstruct the hearse.

The good priest who had married Renaldo was not a little scandalised at this ferocious behaviour in a clergyman, and could not help saying aloud, he was a disgrace to the cloth; when the horseman looking up to the window, replied, "Sir, may I be d—n'd, if any man in England has a greater respect

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for the cloth than I have; but at present I am quite distracted." So saying, he whipped up the horses, and had actually disentangled the hearse from those who surrounded it, when he was opposed by another troop, one of whom alighted with great expedition, and cut the harness so as that he could not possibly proceed. Finding himself thus driven to bay, he leaped upon the ground, and exercised his weapon with such amazing strength and agility, that several of his antagonists were left motionless on the field, before he was overpowered and disarmed by dint of numbers, who assailed him on all sides.

The mad parson being thus taken prisoner, an elderly person, of a very prepossessing appearance, went up to the hearse, and, unbolting the door, a young lady sprung out, and shrieking, ran directly to the public-house, to the infinite astonishment and affright of the whole family, who believed it was the spirit of the deceased person, whose body lay in the carriage. Renaldo, who was with difficulty restrained from interposing in behalf of the clergyman against such odds, no sooner perceived this apparition, than, supposing her to be some distressed damsel, his Quixotism awoke, he descended in an instant, and rushed into the house, among those that pursued the fair phantom. Don Diego and the physician took the same road, while the real clergyman and Joshua tarried with the ladies, who were, by this time, very much interested in the event.

Melvil found the young lady in the hands of the old gentleman, who had released her from the hearse, and who now bitterly upbraided her for her folly

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and disobedience; while she protested with great vivacity, that whatever she might suffer from his severity, she would never submit to the hateful match he had proposed, nor break the promise she had already made to the gentleman who now attempted to rescue her from the tyranny of a cruel father. This declaration was followed by a plentiful shower of tears, which the father could not behold with unmoistened eyes, although he reviled her with marks of uncommon displeasure; and turning to the Count, "I appeal to you, sir," said he, "whether I have not reason to curse the undutiful obstinacy of that pert baggage, and renounce her for ever as an alien to my blood. She has, for some months, been solicited in marriage by an honest citizen, a thirty thousand pound man; and instead of listening to such an advantageous proposal, she hath bestowed her heart upon a young fellow not worth a groat. Ah! you degenerate hussy, this comes of your plays and romances. If thy mother were not a woman of an unexceptionable life and conversation, I should verily believe thou art no child of mine. Run away with a beggar! for shame!"

"I suppose," replied Renaldo, "the person to whom your daughter's affection inclines, is that clergyman who exerted himself so manfully at the door?" "Clergyman!" cried the other, "adad! he has more of the devil than the church about him. A ruffian! he has, for aught I know, murdered the worthy gentleman whom I intended for my son-in-law; and the rogue, if I had not kept out of his way, would, I suppose, have served me with the same sauce.

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Me! who have been his master for many years, and had resolved to make a man of him. Sir, he was my own clerk, and this is the return I have met with from the serpent which I cherished in my bosom."

Here he was interrupted by the arrival of the citizen for whom he had expressed such concern; that gentleman had received a contusion upon one eye, by which the sight was altogether obstructed, so that he concluded he should never retrieve the use of that organ, and with great clamour took all the spectators to witness the injury he had sustained; he entered the room with manifest perturbation, demanded satisfaction of the father, and peremptorily declared it should not be a lost eye to him if there was law in England. This unseasonable demand, and the boisterous manner in which it was made, did not at all suit the present humour of the old gentleman, who told him peevishly he owed him no eye, and bade him go and ask reparation of the person who had done him wrong.

The young lady snatching this favourable occasion, earnestly entreated Melvil and his company to intercede with her father in behalf of her lover, who, she assured them, was a young gentleman of a good family, and uncommon merit; and in compliance with her request they invited him and his daughter to the house in which they lodged, where they would be disencumbered of the crowd which this dispute had gathered together, and more at leisure to consult about the measures necessary to be taken. The old gentleman thanked them for their courtesy, which he did not think proper to refuse, and while he led,

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or rather hauled Mademoiselle over the way, under the auspices of the Castilian, Renaldo set the lover at liberty, made him a tender of his good offices, and advised him to wait at the public-house for an happy issue of their negotiation.

The pseudo-parson was very much affected by this generous proffer, for which he made suitable acknowledgments, and protested before God he would die a thousand deaths rather than part with his dear Charlotte. Her father no sooner entered the apartment, than he was known by Joshua to be a considerable trader in the city of London, and the merchant was glad to find himself among his acquaintance. He was so full of the story which had brought him thither, that he had scarce sat down when he began to complain of his hard fate, in having an only child who was so mean, stubborn, and contumacious; and every sentence was concluded with an apostrophe of reproaches to the delinquent.

The Jew having allowed him to ring out his alarm, condoled his misfortune, and gravely counselled the young lady to wean her affections from such an unworthy object, for he supposed her favourite was a man of no principle, or liberal endowments, otherwise her father would not exclaim so bitterly against her conduct. Charlotte, who wanted neither beauty nor understanding, assured him that her lover's character was, in all respects, unblemished, for the truth of which assertion she appealed to her papa, who owned, with reluctance, that the young man was a gentleman by birth, that he had served him with re-

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markable diligence and integrity, and that his accomplishments were far superior to his station in life. "But then," said he, "the fellow has not a shilling of his own, and would you have me give away my daughter to a beggar?"

"God forbid!" cried the Jew, "I always understood you possessed an ample fortune, and am sorry to find it otherwise." "Otherwise!" cried the citizen, with some acrimony, "take care what you say, sir; a merchant's credit is not to be tampered with." "I beg your pardon," answered the Hebrew, "I concluded that your circumstances were bad, because you objected to the poverty of the young man after you had owned he was possessed of every other qualification to make your daughter happy; for it is not to be imagined that you would thwart her inclinations, or seek to render an only child miserable on account of an obstacle which you yourself could easily remove. Let us suppose you can afford to give with your daughter ten thousand pounds, which would enable this young man to live with credit and reputation, and engage advantageously in trade, for which you say he is well qualified, the alternative then will be, whether you would rather see her in the arms of a deserving youth whom she loves, enjoying all the comforts of life with a moderate fortune, which it will always be in your own power to improve, or tied for life to a monied man whom she detests, cursing her hard fate, and despising that superfluity of wealth, in spite of which she finds herself so truly wretched."

The old gentleman seemed to be startled at this

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observation, which was reinforced by Renaldo's saying, that he would, moreover, enjoy the unutterable pleasure of giving happiness to a worthy man, whose gratitude would co-operate with his love, in approving himself a dutiful son, as well as an affectionate husband. He then represented the family disquiets and dismal tragedies produced from such mercenary and compulsive matches, and, in conclusion related the story of Don Diego and his daughter, which when the merchant heard, he started up with marks of terror in his countenance, and, throwing up the casement, called upon Valentine with great vociferation. This was the name of his daughter's admirer, who no sooner heard the summons than he flew to the spot from whence it came, and the merchant, without any further preamble, seizing his hand, joined it with that of Charlotte, saying, with great trepidation, "Here, take her, in the name of God, and thank this honourable company for your good fortune."

The lovers were transported with exquisite joy at this sudden determination in their favour. Valentine, having kissed the hand of his mistress with all the eagerness of rapture, and acknowledged the merchant's generosity, paid his respects to the ladies with a very polite address, and with demonstrations of uncommon gratitude and sensibility, thanked the gentlemen, and the Count in particular, for their good offices, to which he attributed the happiness he now enjoyed. While Serafina and Madam Clement caressed the amiable Charlotte, the rest of the company congratulated her admirer upon his choice and

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success, though the clergyman could not help reprehending him for profaning the sacerdotal habit.

Valentine heartily asked pardon for having given such cause of offence, and hoped he should be forgiven, as it was a disguise which he thought absolutely necessary for the execution of a scheme upon which his happiness depended. He then, at the request of Renaldo, unfolded the mystery of the hearse, by giving them to understand that Charlotte's father having got inkling of their mutual passion, had dismissed his clerk, and conveyed his daughter to a country-house in the neighbourhood of London, in order to cut off their correspondence; notwithstanding these precautions they had found means to communicate with each other by letters, which were managed by a third person; and his rival being very importunate in his solicitations, they had concerted the expedient of the hearse, which he provided and conducted through a road contiguous to the end of the merchant's garden, where Charlotte, being apprised of the design, waited for its approach, and embarked in it without hesitation. Valentine thought himself sufficiently screened from discovery by his disguise, but he was unfortunately met by a servant of the family, who recollected his features, and immediately gave the alarm, upon which the father and his friends took horse, and pursued them by two different roads, until they were overtaken at this place.

He had scarce finished this short relation, when his rival, bluntly entering the apartment, with an handkerchief tied round his eye, committed Valentine

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to the charge of a constable, who attended him, by a warrant from a justice of the peace in that neighbourhood, and threatened to prosecute the merchant on an action of damages for the loss of an eye, which he said he had sustained in his service. The company endeavoured to appease this citizen, by representing that his misfortune was no other than a common inflammation, nor was it owing to malice aforethought, but entirely to the precipitate passion of an incensed young man, who, by the bye, acted in his own defence. At the same time the merchant promised to make any reasonable satisfaction, upon which the other demanded an obligation, importing that he would, in ten days from the date, bestow upon him his daughter in marriage, with a portion of fifteen thousand pounds, or, in case of failure, pay him double the sum.

The merchant, exasperated at this extravagant demand, told him flatly he had already disposed of his daughter to Valentine, who, he believed, was a much more deserving man, and that he was ready to wait upon the magistrate who had granted the warrant, in order to give bail for his future son-in-law. This was a mortifying declaration to the plaintiff, though he condoled himself with the hope of being a gainer by the loss of his eye, and now the pain was over would have been very sorry to find his sight retrieved. The old gentleman, Joshua, and Renaldo accompanied the prisoner to the house of the justice, where he was immediately admitted to bail. Upon their return Valentine shifted his dress, and they supped together with great cordiality and

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mirth, maintained at the expense of the discarded lover.

After supper Don Diego walked a minuet with Madam Clement; for whom, by this time, he had contracted an extraordinary degree of affection. Valentine had the honour to dance with the incomparable Serafina, whose beauty and attractions dazzled the eyes of the new-comers, and struck her bashful partner with awe and confusion; and Melvil presented his hand to the agreeable Charlotte, who performed so much to the satisfaction of her father, that he could not help expressing his joy and pride. He praised God for throwing him in the way of our company, and engaged the clergyman to unite the young couple, after having appointed a day for the ceremony, and invited all present to the wedding. The evening having been insensibly consumed in these avocations, and the night pretty far advanced, the ladies withdrew without ceremony; and the retreat of Serafina filled Renaldo's breast with tumult and emotion; his blood began to flow in impetuous tides, his heart to beat with redoubled vigour and velocity, while his eyes seemed to flash with more than human splendour. Now his imagination began to anticipate with the enthusiastic rage of an inspired sibyl; he was instantaneously transported from the conversation, and every nerve was braced to such a degree of impatience, that human nature could not long endure the tension.

He, therefore, having withstood the impulse about a quarter of an hour, at length gave way to his impetuosity, and, springing from his friends, found him-

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self in a dark passage, at the farther end of which he perceived Madam Clement coming out of a chamber with a light, which, at sight of him, she set down, and vanished in a moment. This was the star that pointed to his paradise; he hailed the signal, entered the apartment, and, like a lion, rushing on his prey, approached the nuptial bed, where Serafina, surrounded by all the graces of beauty, softness, sentiment, and truth, lay trembling as a victim at the altar, and strove to hide her blushes from his view — the door was shut, the light extinguished — he owned his lot was more than mortal man could claim.

Here let me draw the decent veil that ought to shade the secret mysteries of Hymen. Away, unhallowed scoffers, who profane, with idle pleasantry or immodest hint, these holy rites; and leave those happy lovers to enjoy, in one another's arms, unutterable bliss, the well-earned palm of virtue and of constancy, which had undergone the most severe refinement. A more deserving pair night's curtain shrouds not in its dark extent.

The thoughts of Renaldo's felicity threw a damp on the spirits of Valentine, who saw the term of his probation protracted a few days longer, and could not help wishing in his heart that he had achieved the adventure which would have abridged his expectation, though at the expense of the old gentleman's displeasure. He filled a bumper to the health of the bride and bridegroom, and throwing up his eyes with marks of admiration, exclaimed, "How happy is the Count! alas! five days longer must I rein my impatience!" "It is but reasonable, you

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rogue, that your betters should have the start of you," said the merchant, who did him justice in the glass, and counselled him to drown his impatience with good claret. The youth followed his advice, and it was late before the company retired to rest.

These citizens, however, resolved to seize an opportunity of rallying the new-married couple, according to custom, and with that view arose early in the morning, on the supposition of finding them still asleep; but they were not a little surprised, when they entered the breakfasting room, to see Renaldo, and his amiable bed-fellow, already dressed, and awaiting to do the honours of the house. The old gentleman would fain have cracked a joke upon their extraordinary despatch, but he was so much overawed by the dignity and tamed by the sweetness of Serafina's carriage, that he durst not give utterance to his conception; and Valentine stood silent and abashed, as in the presence of a superior being. After breakfast these gentlemen and Charlotte again expressed their sense of the obligations they owed to this happy family, repeated their invitation, and, taking leave, returned to London in a coach that was provided overnight.

Our friends being thus left to themselves, Don Diego turned towards Melvil: "Now," said he, "that I have yielded to the impatience of your love, as well as to the eagerness of my own desire to make you happy, I must beg leave to interrupt, for a little while, the stream of your mutual pleasure, and propose a melancholy excursion, which, however, will not

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be wholly void of enjoyment. I have too long delayed the performance of my duty at Antonia's grave — let us spend the forenoon in that pious pilgrimage — I will drop a few tears to the memory of that excellent woman, and never afterwards shall my friends be troubled with my grief."

The proposal being universally approved, they set out for the place, which had oft been visited by the gentle Serafina, who conducted her father to a black marble stone, which Renaldo had ordered to be laid over the grave; and, as he kneeled to kiss the monument, he perceived this plain inscription in the Spanish tongue: — *Antonia de Zelos primera en todo lo que es ser bueno, y sin segundo en todo lo que fue ser desdichado, quedad con Dios!* that is, *Antonia de Zelos, unmatched in virtue, and unequalled in misfortune, adieu!* "O faithful record!" cried the Castilian, smiting his breast, while his tears distilled upon the marble, "thy goodness was the gift of Heaven, but thy misfortunes were derived from the guilt of Don Diego; yet his sorrow shall expiate his offence, and his penitence find favour in the sight of Heaven! Rest, rest, ill-fated virtue! — eternal peace shall guard thy tomb, and angels minister to thy unspotted shade; nor shall thine ashes lie in dark obscurity: here will I raise a monument, more suited to thy excellence and name." Serafina melted with filial tenderness; nor were the rest unmoved at this affecting scene, which Don Diego did not quit without reluctance.

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CHAPTER SIXTY-SEVEN

THE LONGEST AND THE LAST.

THE nature of this visit had softened every heart, and saddened every countenance; and they walked in solemn silence to the other side of the church-yard, in order to regain their carriages; when, at the turning of the stile, they saw a young woman, in wretched attire, running out of a poor habitation, wringing her hands in all the agony of despair. Notwithstanding the distraction in her countenance, and the meanness of her apparel, she discovered a regularity of features, and a delicacy of air, which did not at all correspond with the misery of her equipage. These exhibitions of extreme distress soon attracted the notice and compassion of our company, and Melvil's beauteous help-mate, accosting this forlorn damsel with a pity-breathing aspect, asked the cause of her disorder.

"Alas! dear lady," cried the other, with all the emphasis of woe, "an unhappy gentleman now breathes his last within this inhospitable hovel, amidst such excess of misery as would melt the most flinty bosom. What then must I feel, who am connected with him by the strongest ties of love and conjugal affection?" "Who is the unfortunate object?" said the physician.

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"He was once well known in the gay world," replied the young woman; "his name is Fathom." Every individual of the company started at mention of that detested name. Serafina began to tremble with emotion; and Renaldo, after a short pause, declared he would go in, not with a view to exult over his misery, but in order to contemplate the catastrophe of such a wicked life, that the moral might be the more deeply engraved on his remembrance. The young Countess, whose tender heart could not bear the shock of such a spectacle, retired to the coach with Madam Clement and the Jew, while Renaldo, accompanied by the rest, entered a dismal apartment, altogether void of furniture and convenience, where they beheld the wretched hero of these memoirs stretched almost naked upon straw, insensible, convulsed, and seemingly in the grasp of death. He was worn to the bone either by famine or distemper; his face was overshadowed with hair and filth; his eyes were sunk, glazed, and distorted; his nostrils dilated; his lips covered with a black slough; and his complexion faded into a pale clay-colour, tending to a yellow hue. In a word, the extremity of indigence, squalor, and distress could not be more feelingly represented.

While Melvil perused this melancholy lesson, and groaning, cried, "Behold the fate of man!" he perceived a letter in the right hand of the unfortunate Fathom, which lay fast clenched across his breast. Curious to know the contents of this paper, which the young woman said he had kept in that position for several days, he drew nearer the wretched couch,

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and was not a little surprised to see it addressed to the Right Honourable Renaldo Count de Melvil, to the care of Mr. Joshua Manesseh, merchant in London. When he attempted to disengage this billet from the author's hand, the sorrowing female fell upon her knees, entreating him to desist, and telling him, she had promised, upon oath, to communicate the contents to no person upon earth, but to carry the letter, upon her husband's decease, to the gentleman to whose care it was directed.

Renaldo assured her, upon his honour, that he was the very Renaldo Count de Melvil, for whom it was intended; and the young creature was so much confounded at this information, that, before she could recollect herself, Melvil had opened the billet, and read these words: "If this paper should fall into the hands of the noble Renaldo, he will understand, that Fathom was the most execrable traitor that ever imposed upon unsuspecting benevolence, or attempted to betray a generous benefactor. His whole life was a series of fraud, perfidy, and the most abominable ingratitude. But, of all the crimes that lay heavy upon his soul, his being accessory to the death of the incomparable Serafina, whose father he had also robbed, was that for which he despaired of Heaven's forgiveness, notwithstanding the dreadful compunction and remorse which have long preyed upon his heart, together with the incredible misery and deplorable death which by this time he hath undergone. Though these sufferings and sorrows cannot atone for his enormous guilt, perhaps they will excite the compassion of the humane Count de Melvil; at least, this confession, which my

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conscience dictates under all the terrors of death and futurity, may be a warning for him to avoid henceforth a smiling villain, like the execrable Fathom, upon whose miserable soul Almighty God have mercy."

Renaldo was deeply affected with the contents of this scroll, which denoted such horror and despair. He saw there could be no dissimulation or sinister design in this profession of penitence. He beheld the condition of the writer, which put all his humane passions in commotion; so that he remembered nothing of Fathom but his present distress. He could scarce maintain those indications which might have been justly deemed the effect of weakness and infirmity; and having desired the physician and clergyman to contribute their assistance for the benefit of that wretch's soul and body, he ran to the coach, and communicated the letter to the ladies; at the same time drawing a picture of the object he had seen, which brought tears into the eyes of the gentle Serafina, who earnestly entreated her lord to use his endeavours for the relief and recovery of the unhappy man, that he might, if possible, live to enjoy the benefit of mature repentance, and not die in that dreadful despair which he manifested in the letter.

Renaldo, returning to the house, found the pious clergyman reading prayers with great fervency, while Don Diego stood with his right hand upon his breast, looking steadfastly upon the agonising Fathom, and the young woman kneeled, with her streaming eyes lifted up to heaven, in an ecstasy of grief and devotion. The physician had run to an apothecary's shop in the neighbourhood, from whence he soon returned

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with an assistant, who applied a large blister to the back of the miserable patient, while the female, by the doctor's direction, moistened his mouth with a cordial which he had prescribed.

These charitable steps being taken, Count de Melvil entreated the apothecary's servant to procure a tent-bed for the accommodation of the sick person with all imaginable despatch; and, in less than an hour, one was actually pitched, and Fathom lifted into it, after he had been shifted, and in some measure purified from the dregs of his indigence. During this transaction the ladies were conducted to a tavern not far off, where dinner was bespoke, that they might be at hand to see the effect of their charity, which was not confined to what we have already described, but extended so far, that, in a little time, the apartment was comfortably furnished, and the young creature provided with change of apparel, and money to procure the necessaries of subsistence.

Notwithstanding all their care, the wretched Fathom still remained insensible, and the doctor pronounced a very unfavourable prognostic, while he ordered a pair of additional vesicatories to be laid upon his arms, and other proper medicines to be administered. After dinner, the ladies ventured to visit the place, and when Serafina crossed the threshold, the weeping female fell at her feet, and, kissing her robe, exclaimed, "Sure you are an angel from heaven."

The alteration in her dress had made a very agreeable change in her appearance, so that the Countess could now look upon her without shuddering at her

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distress. And, as Fathom was not in a condition to be disturbed, she took this opportunity of inquiring by what steps that unfortunate wretch was conveyed from the prison, in which she knew he had been confined, to the place where he now lay in such extremity; and by what occurrence he had found a wife in such an abyss of misfortune. Here the other's tears began to flow afresh. "I am ashamed," said she, "to reveal my own folly; yet I dare not refuse a satisfaction of this kind to a person who has laid me under such signal obligations."

She then proceeded to relate her story, by which it appeared, she was no other than the fair and unhappy Elenor, whom the artful Fathom had debauched upon his first arrival in town, in the manner already described in these memoirs. "Heaven," continued she, "was pleased to restore the use of my reason, which I had lost when I found myself abandoned by the Count; but, all my connexion with my own family being entirely cut off, and every door shut against a poor creature who could procure no recommendation, except the certificate signed by the physician of Bedlam, which, instead of introducing me to service, was an insurmountable objection to my character, I found myself destitute of all means of subsisting, unless I would condescend to live the infamous and wretched life of a courtezan, an expedient rendered palatable by the terrors of want, co-operating with the reflection of the irretrievable loss I had already sustained. I ask pardon for offending your chaste ears with this impure confession of my guilt, which, Heaven knows, I then did, and now do

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look upon with abhorrence and detestation. I had already forfeited my innocence, and wanted resolution to encounter misery and death. Nevertheless, before I could determine to embrace the condition of a prostitute, I was one day accosted in the Park by an elderly gentleman who sat down by me upon a bench, and, taking notice of the despondence which was evident in my countenance, pressed me to make him acquainted with the nature of my misfortune. So much sympathy and good sense appeared in his deportment and conversation, that I gratified his request, and he, in return for my confidence, saved me from the most horrible part of my prospect, by taking me into his protection, and reserving me for his own appetite. In this situation I lived a whole year, until I was deprived of my keeper by an apoplectic fit, and turned out of doors by his relations, who did not, however, strip me of the clothes and moveables which I owed to his bounty. Far from being as yet reconciled to a vicious life, I resolved to renounce the paths of shame, and, converting my effects into ready money, hired a small shop, and furnished it with haberdashery ware, intending to earn an honest livelihood by the sale of these commodities, together with the plain work in which I hoped to be employed so soon as my talents should be known. But this scheme did not answer my expectation. The goods spoiled upon my hands, and, as I was a stranger in the neighbourhood, nobody would intrust me with any other business. So that, notwithstanding the most parsimonious economy, I ran in debt to my landlord, who seized

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my effects; and an hosier, from whom I had received some parcels upon credit, took out a writ against me, by virtue of which I was arrested and imprisoned in the Marshalsea, where I found my first seducer. Good Heaven! what did I feel at this unexpected meeting, overwhelmed as I was before with my own distress! I with a loud scream fainted away, and, when I recovered, found myself in the arms of Mr. Fathom, who wept over me with great affliction. All his prospects of gaiety had now vanished, and his heart was softened by his own misfortunes, to a feeling of another's woe, as well as to a due sense of his own guilt. He expressed the deepest sorrow for having been the occasion of my ruin, endeavoured to comfort me with a promise of assistance, and indeed, by practising medicine among the prisoners, made shift to keep us both from starving. But surely no sinner underwent such severe remorse as that which he suffered during his imprisonment. From the day of our meeting, I never once saw him smile; a melancholy cloud continually overhung his countenance. He numbered the minutes by his groans, he used to start with horror from his sleep, and, striking his breast, would exclaim, 'O Elenor! I am the worst of villains!' Sometimes he seemed disordered in his brain, and raved about Renaldo and Monimia. In a word, his mind was in a dreadful situation, and all his agonies were communicated to me, whom by this time he had married, in order to make some atonement for my wrongs. Wretched as he then was, I remembered the accomplished youth who had captivated my virgin heart,

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the old impressions still remained, I saw his penitence, pitied his misfortune, and his wife being dead, consented to join his fate, the ceremony having been performed by a fellow-prisoner, who was in orders. Though his hard-hearted creditor had no other chance of being paid, than that of setting him at liberty, he lent a deaf ear to all our supplications; and this cruelty conspiring with the anguish of my husband's own reflection, affected his health and spirits to such a degree, that he could no longer earn the miserable pittance which had hitherto supported our lives. Then our calamities began to multiply. Indigence and famine stared us in the face; and it was with the utmost difficulty that we resisted their attacks, by selling or pledging our wearing apparel, until we were left almost quite naked, when we found ourselves discharged by an act passed for the relief of insolvent debtors. This charitable law, which was intended for a consolation to the wretched, proved to us the most severe disaster; for we were turned out into the streets, utterly destitute of food, raiment, and lodging, at a time when Mr. Fathom was so weakened by his distemper, that he could not stand alone. I supported him from door to door, imploring the compassion of charitable Christians, and was at length permitted to shelter him in this miserable place, where his disease gaining ground, he lay three days in that deplorable condition, from which he hath now been rescued, though I fear too late, by your humanity and benevolence."

She shed a flood of tears at the conclusion of this mournful tale, which did not fail to affect the whole

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audience, especially Serafina, who assured her, that, whatever should happen to her husband, she might depend upon finding favour and protection, provided her conduct should correspond with her professions. While this grateful creature kissed the hand of her kind benefactress, Fathom uttered a groan, began to stir in the bed, and with a languid voice called upon Elenor, who, instantly withdrawing the curtain, presented the whole company to his view. He had now retrieved the use of his perception by the operation of the blisters, which began to torture him severely; he looked around him with amazement and affright, and distinguishing the three persons against whom the chief arrows of his fraud and treachery had been levelled, he concluded that he was now arrived at the land of departed souls, and that the shades of those whom he had so grievously injured were come to see him tormented according to his demerits.

Fraught with this notion, which was confirmed by the bodily pain which he felt, and the appearance of the clergyman and Joshua, whom he mistook for the ministers of vengeance, he cried in a tone replete with horror, "Is there no mercy then for penitence? Is there no pity due to the miseries I suffered upon earth? Save me, O bountiful Heaven! from the terrors of everlasting woe; hide me from these dreadful executioners, whose looks are torture. Forgive me, generous Castilian. O Renaldo! thou hadst once a tender heart. I dare not lift my eyes to Serafina! that pattern of human excellence, who fell a victim to my atrocious guilt; yet her aspect is all

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mildness and compassion. Hah! are not these the drops of pity? Yes, they are the tears of mercy. They fall like refreshing showers upon my drooping soul! Ah, murdered innocence! wilt thou not intercede for thy betrayer at the throne of grace!"

Here he was interrupted by Melvil, who with a grave and solemn air pronounced, "Great hath been thy guilt, unhappy Ferdinand, and great have been thy sufferings. Yet we come not to insult, but to alleviate thy distress. Providence hath kindly defeated thy dire intentions, which we therefore now forgive and transmit to oblivion, whether it be thy lot to yield up thy spirit immediately, or to survive the dangerous malady with which thou art at present overwhelmed. Suffer not thyself to despair; for the mercy of Heaven is infinite; and submit to the directions of this worthy gentleman, who will employ his skill for thy recovery, while we shall take care to furnish thee with necessary attendance. As too much speaking may be prejudicial to thy health, I dispense with thy reply, and exhort thee to compose thyself to rest." So saying, he drew the curtain, and the company retired, leaving Fathom entranced with wonder.

The next step which Renaldo took for the benefit of this wretched penitent, was to send for the apothecary, with whom he left a sum of money to be expended for the convenience of Fathom and his wife; then he laid injunctions upon the physician to repeat his visits; and that gentleman, together with the clergyman and Joshua, taking leave of the others till next day, the Count set out with the ladies and his

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father-in-law to the house where they had lodged the preceding night.

The reader may well imagine the conversation of the evening turned wholly upon the strange occurrence of the day, which seemed to have been concerted by supernatural prescience, in order to satisfy the vengeance, and afford matter of triumph to the generosity of those who had been so grievously injured by the guilty Fathom. Though not one of them would say that such a miscreant ought to live, yet all concurred in approving the offices of humanity which had been performed, and even endeavoured to find specious pretext for vindicating their compassion. Don Diego said, it would ill become a transgressor like him to withhold his forgiveness from a sinner who had wronged him. Madam Clement appealed to the approbation of Heaven, which had undoubtedly directed them that way, for the purpose they had fulfilled. Serafina observed, that the crimes of the delinquent were obliterated by his sorrow, misery, and repentance. Renaldo honestly owned, that, exclusive of other reasons, he could not deny himself the luxurious enjoyment of communicating happiness to his fellow-creatures in distress; and each fervently prayed, that their charity might not be disappointed by the death of the object.

While they amused themselves in these discussions, Fathom, after having lain some hours silent, in consequence of Renaldo's advice, could no longer suppress the astonishment of his mind, but, addressing himself to his wife, "O Elenor!" said he, "my delirium is now past; though I still remember the

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phantasies of my distempered brain. Among other reveries, my imagination was regaled with a vision so perfect and distinct, as to emulate truth and reality. Methought Count de Melvil, Don Diego de Zelos, and the divine Serafina, the very persons who are now crying before the throne of Heaven for vengeance against the guilty Fathom, stood by my bedside, with looks of pity and forgiveness; and that Renaldo spoke peace to my despairing soul. I heard the words distinctly. I retain them in my memory. I saw the tears trickle from Serafina's eyes. I heard her father utter a compassionate sigh; and should actually believe that they were personally present, had not I long ago seen with my own eyes the funeral procession of that young lady, whose wrongs God pardon; and were I not convinced that such a meeting could not be effected without the immediate and miraculous interposition of Heaven. Yet everything I now see corresponds with the words of Renaldo, which still sound in my ears. When my perception forsook me, I lay in the most abject misery, among straw; and thou, poor injured innocence, wast naked and forlorn. Now, I find myself reposed in a warm, easy, comfortable bed. I see around me the marks of human charity and care, and the favourable change in thy appearance glads my poor dejected heart. Say, whence this happy alteration? Do I really awake from that dream of misery in which we have continued so long? or do I still utter the extravagant ravings of a distempered brain?"

Elenor was afraid of imparting at once all the particulars of the happy change he had undergone, lest

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they might leave a dangerous impression upon his fancy, which was not yet duly composed. She contented herself, therefore, with telling him, that he had been obliged to the humanity of a gentleman and lady, who chanced to pass that way by accident, and who, understanding his deplorable case, had furnished him with the conveniences which he now enjoyed. She then presented to him what the doctor had directed her to administer, and, admonishing him to commit his head to the pillow, he was favoured with a breathing sweat, fell fast asleep, and in a few hours waked again altogether cool and undisturbed.

It was upon this occasion that his wife explained the circumstances of that visit which had redeemed him from extremity of wretchedness and the jaws of death; upon which he started up, and throwing himself upon his knees, exclaimed, "All-gracious Power! this was the work of thy own bounteous hand; the voice of my sorrow and repentance hath been heard. Thou hast inspired my benefactors with more than mortal goodness in my behalf; how shall I praise thy name! how shall I requite their generosity! Oh, I am bankrupt to both! yet let me not perish until I shall have convinced them of my reformation, and seen them enjoying that felicity which ought to be reserved for such consummate virtue."

Next day, in the forenoon, he was visited by the physician, whom he now recollected to have seen at the house of Madam Clement; and, after having thanked that gentleman for his humanity and care, he earnestly begged to know by what means Serafina had been preserved. When he was satisfied in this

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particular, and given to understand that she was now happy in the arms of Renaldo, "Blessed be God!" he cried, "for having defeated the villany of him who sought to part such lovers. Dear sir, will you add one circumstance to your charity, and bear to that happy couple, and the noble Don Diego, the respects and the remorse of a sincere penitent, whom their compassion hath raised to life? I have been such a traitor to them, that my words deserve no regard. I will not therefore use professions. I dare not hope to be admitted into their presence. I am indeed ashamed to see the light of the sun. How then could I bear the looks of that injured family? ah, no! let me hide myself in some obscure retreat, where I may work out my salvation with fear and trembling, and pray incessantly to Heaven for their prosperity."

The physician promised to represent his contrition to the Count and his lady, and accordingly proceeded to their habitation, where he repeated these expressions, and pronounced his patient out of danger. So that their thoughts were now employed in concerting a scheme for his future subsistence, that he might not be exposed by indigence to a relapse in point of morals. Renaldo being still averse to any personal intercourse with such a wretch, until he should give some undoubted proofs of amendment, and, as yet afraid of intrusting him with any office that required integrity, resolved, with the approbation of all present, to settle him in a cheap county in the north of England, where he and his wife could live comfortably on an annuity of sixty pounds, until

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his behaviour should entitle him to a better provision.

This resolution was just taken, when Joshua arrived with a gentleman whom he introduced to Don Diego as the secretary of the Spanish ambassador. After the first compliments, the stranger told the Castilian, that he waited upon him at the desire of his Excellency, who would have come in person, had he not been confined by the gout. Then he put into his hand a letter from the court of Madrid, written by a nobleman of Diego's acquaintance, who informed him, that Don Manuel de Mendoza having made away with himself by poison, in order to avoid the disgrace of a legal conviction, his Catholic Majesty was now convinced of Don Diego's innocence, and granted him leave to return and take possession of his honours and estate. This information was confirmed by the secretary, who assured him that the ambassador had orders to make him acquainted with this favourable decision of the King. The Castilian having first acquitted himself in the most polite terms to the secretary and the Jew, who, he said, had always been a messenger of glad tidings, communicated his happiness to the company; and this evening concluded the third day of their rejoicing.

Next morning Don Diego went to visit the ambassador, accompanied by Joshua and the secretary; while the physician, repairing to the habitation of Fathom, signified, by Renaldo's direction, the resolution which had been taken in his behalf; and the patient no sooner heard his doom, than, lifting up his hands, he cried, "I am unworthy of such tender-

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ness and benevolence." While Elenor shed a flood of tears in silence, unable to give utterance to her grateful thought; Melvil's bounty having so far transcended her most sanguine hope.

The Spaniard having paid his devoirs to his Excellency, returned before dinner; and, in the afternoon, desiring a private conference with Serafina, they retired into another apartment, and he expressed himself to this effect: "You have contracted, my dear child, an habit of calling Madam Clement your mother, and doubtless, by her maternal tenderness and regard, she hath acquired a just title to the appellation. Yet I own I would fain strengthen it by a legal claim. I no sooner retrieved my daughter than I gave her away to the most deserving youth that ever sighed with love. — I rejoice in the gift which secured your happiness. But I left myself in a solitary situation, which even the return of my good fortune cannot render easy and supportable. When I revisit the Castle of Zelos, every well-known object will recall the memory of my Antonia, and I shall want a companion to fill her place, and to sympathise with me in that sorrow which will be derived from my remembrance. Who is there so worthy to succeed your mother in the affection of Don Diego, as she who interests her love for Serafina, and resembles her so strongly in every virtue of the sex? Similar attractions will produce similar effects. My heart is already attached to that good lady; and, provided Serafina shall approve of my choice, I will lay myself and fortune at her feet."

The fair Countess replied, with an enchanting

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smile, that, before this declaration, she had with pleasure perceived the progress which Madam Clement had made in his heart; and that she did not believe there was a person upon earth better qualified to repair the loss he had sustained; though she foresaw one obstacle to his happiness, which she was afraid would not be easily surmounted. "You mean," answered the Castilian, "the difference of religion, which I am resolved to remove by adopting the Protestant faith; though I am fully satisfied that real goodness is of no particular persuasion, and that salvation cannot depend upon belief, over which the will has no influence. I invest you, therefore, with the charge of declaring my passion and proposal, and empower you to satisfy her scruples with regard to the religion which I now profess, and which I shall not openly relinquish, until I shall have secured, in this country, effects sufficient to screen me from the ill consequences of my King's displeasure."

Serafina undertook this office with pleasure, because she had reason to think his addresses would not be disagreeable to Madam Clement; and that same night made the Count acquainted with the nature of her commission. Nor was her expectation disappointed. The French lady, with that frankness which is peculiar to virtue and good breeding, confessed that Don Diego was not indifferent to her choice, and did not hesitate in receiving him upon the footing of a lover. — As we have already dwelt circumstantially on the passion of love, so as perhaps even to have tired our readers, we shall not repeat the dialogue that passed, when the Spaniard was indulged with an

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opportunity to explain his sentiments. Suffice it to observe, that the lady's days of coquetry were now over, and that she was too wise to trifle with the time, which every moment became more and more precious. It was agreed then, that Don Diego should settle his affairs in Spain, and return to England, in order to espouse Madam Clement, with a view to fix his residence in this island, where Renaldo likewise proposed to enjoy the sweets of his fortune, provided he could draw hither his interests and connexions.

Meanwhile, having for some days enjoyed his bliss with all the fulness of rapture amidst this small but agreeable society, he shifted the scene, and conducted his dear partner to a ready-furnished house in town, which, together with an occasional equipage, his friend Joshua had hired for the accommodation of him and his father-in-law, who, during his stay in England, failed not to cultivate the mistress of his heart with the most punctual assiduity. Hitherto Serafina had been as a precious jewel locked up in a casket, which the owner alone had an opportunity to contemplate. But now the Count, who was proud of such a prize, resolved to let her shine forth to the admiration of the whole world. With this view he bespoke such ornaments as befitted her quality, and, while the mantua-makers were employed in her service, made a tour among his former acquaintance, and discharged the obligations under which he lay to some who had assisted him in his distress. He did not, however, introduce them to his charming Serafina; because not one of them had formerly treated her with that delicacy of regard which he thought

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her due; and some of them were much mortified at their neglect, when they saw what a dazzling figure she made in the beau monde.

She was visited by the Spanish and Imperial ambassadors, and divers other foreigners of distinction, to whom Melvil had letters of recommendation. But her first public appearance was in a box at the opera, accompanied by Madam Clement, the Count, and Don Diego. The entertainment was already begun, so that her entrance had the greater effect upon the audience, whose attention was soon detached from the performance, and riveted upon this amiable apparition, which seemed to be some bright being of another world dropped from the clouds among them. Then did the spirit of curiosity play its part. A thousand whispers circulated; as many glasses were exalted to reconnoitre this box of foreigners; for such they concluded them to be from their appearance. Every male spectator acknowledged Serafina to be the paragon of beauty; and every female confessed, that Melvil was the model of a fine gentleman. The charms of the young Countess did not escape the eye and approbation of royalty itself; and when her rank was known, from the information of the ambassadors and other people of condition who were seen saluting her at a distance, that same evening a thousand bumpers were swallowed in honour of the Countess de Melvil. The fame of her beauty was immediately extended over this immense metropolis, and different schemes were concerted for bringing her into life. These, however, she resisted with unwearied obstinacy. Her happiness centred in Renaldo, and the cultiva-

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tion of a few friends within the shade of domestic quiet. She did not even forget the concerns of the wretched Fathom and his faithful Elenor, who daily enjoyed fresh instances of her humanity and care. When his fever forsook him, he was supplied with nourishing food for the recovery of his health; and as soon as he found himself in a condition to travel, he gave notice to his benefactor, who desired Joshua to settle with him the manner in which he was to receive his allowance, and to pay the first half-year's salary per advance.

This affair being adjusted, and the place of his retreat signified, the Jew told Elenor, that she might wait upon the Countess before their departure; and she did not fail to make use of this permission. After they had made the necessary preparations for their journey, and taken places in the York stage-coach, Mrs. Fathom, clothing herself in decent apparel, went to the house of Count Melvil, and was immediately admitted to the presence of Serafina, who received her with her usual complacency, enriched her with salutary advice, comforted her with the hope of better things, provided her conduct and that of her husband should henceforth be found irreproachable; and, wishing her peace and happiness, presented her with a box of linen, and twenty guineas in a purse. Such excessive goodness overpowered this sensible young woman to such a degree, that she stood before her in speechless awe and veneration; and the Countess, in order to relieve her from the confusion under which she suffered, quitted the room, leaving her to the care of her woman. It was not

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long, however, before her gratitude broke out in loud exclamations and a violent passion of tears, which all her efforts could not, for a while, overcome. By this time the coach was brought up to the gate for the reception of Serafina, who took an airing every day at the same hour; when Renaldo, leading her to the vehicle, beheld a man plainly dressed standing within the court, with his head and body bent towards the earth, so that his countenance could not be perceived.

Melvil, who supposed him to be some unfortunate man come to implore his charity, turned towards him, and asked with a humane accent, if he wanted to speak with any person in the house? To this interrogation the stranger replied, without lifting up his head, "Overwhelmed as I am with Count Melvil's generosity, together with a consciousness of my own unworthiness, it ill becomes a wretch like me to importune him for further favour; yet I could not bear the thought of withdrawing, perhaps for ever, from the presence of my benefactor, without soliciting his permission to see his face in mercy, to acknowledge my atrocious crimes, to hear my pardon confirmed by his voice, and that of his accomplished Countess, whom I dare not even at a distance behold; and to express my fervent wish for their prosperity."

Melvil, whose heart was but too tender, could not hear this address without emotion. He recognised the companion of his infancy and youth; he remembered the happy scenes he had enjoyed with Fathom, whose voice had always such an effect upon his ear,

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as to excite the ideas of friendship and esteem; and he was disturbed by this unexpected meeting, which also discomposed the beauteous Serafina. Renaldo having paused a little, "It is with pain," said he, "I recollect anything to the prejudice of Fathom, whose future behaviour will, I hope, erase the memory of his offences, and justify what other steps I may take in his favour. Meanwhile, I heartily forgive what is past; and, in token of my sincerity, present my hand"; which our adventurer bathed with his tears. The Countess, whose mind was in unison with her husband, repeated her assurances of pardon and protection; at which the penitent rejoiced in silence, while he raised his head and took a parting view of those charms which had formerly enslaved his heart.

Having thus obeyed the dictates of his duty and inclination, he next morning embarked in the stage-coach, with his faithful Elenor, and in six days arrived at the place of his retreat, which he found extremely well adapted to the circumstances of his mind and fortune. For all his vice and ambition was now quite mortified within him, and his whole attention engrossed in atoning for his former crimes, by a sober and penitent life, by which alone he could deserve the uncommon generosity of his patrons.

While he thus accommodated himself to his new system, Renaldo received letters of congratulation from his sister, who with the Major had come to Brussels, in order to meet her brother and Serafina, according to his proposal. This intimation being communicated to Don Diego, he resolved to accom-

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pany them to Flanders, on his way to Spain. Preparations were made for their departure; the clergyman and physician were honoured with valuable marks of friendship and esteem from the Countess, Renaldo, and the Castilian, who were convoyed to Deal by Madam Clement, to whom, at parting, Don Diego presented a diamond ring, as a pledge of his inviolable love.

Here the travellers hired a vessel for Ostend, which they reached in a few hours; in two days more they arrived at Brussels, where Mrs. Farrel and her husband were struck with admiration at the surprising beauty and accomplishment of their sister-in-law, whom they caressed with equal tenderness and joy. — In a word, all parties were as happy as good fortune could make them; and Don Diego set out for Spain, after they had agreed to reside in the Low Countries till his return.

THE END.

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